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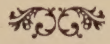

CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES

Edited by

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and

CHARLES BAYLY, JR.

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TO

K. F. G. AND H. M. B.

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Sherwood Anderson. I WANT TO KNOW WHY 1

Mr. Anderson was born in Ohio on September 13, 1876. He is married and now lives in New Orleans or on his Virginia farm. Among his books are *Windy McPherson's Son; Horses and Men; Winesburg, Ohio; Poor White; The Triumph of the Egg; Many Marriages; Dark Laughter;* and *A Story Teller's Story.*

Stacy Aumonier. A SOURCE OF IRRITATION 14

Mr. Aumonier was born in 1887. He is an Englishman of Huguenot descent. He lives in London. He began his career as a decorative designer and began writing in 1913. His novels are *Olga Bardel, Just Outside, The Querrils, One After Another,* and *Heartbeat.* Many of his short stories are collected in the following volumes: *The Love-a-Duck, Miss Bracegirdle and Others, Odd Fish,* and *The Baby Grand.*

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Princess Bibesco is the daughter of the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, the former Prime Minister of England. She married, in 1919, Prince Antoine Bibesco. For several years she lived in Washington, where her husband was the Minister from Rumania. She has written a novel, *The Fir and the Palm,* and three books of short stories, *Balloons, I Have Only Myself to Blame,* and *The Whole Story.*

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Mr. Boyd was born on July 3, 1898, in Ohio. He now lives in Connecticut. He served in France with the Marines and first came into prominence with his novel of the war, *Through the Wheat. The Dark Cloud* and *Samuel Drummond* are later novels, and *Points of Honor* is a book of short stories. He is a frequent contributor to *Scribner's* and other magazines.

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Sir Hugh Clifford, K.C.M.G., was born in London on March 5, 1866. In 1883 he joined the Malay States Civil Service. Until 1911 he was engaged almost constantly in the government of the Malay States. When he was only twenty he went on a special mission to the Sultan of Pahang, in whose territory he later became Resident. He has also been administrator in Trinidad and Ceylon and Governor of the Gold Coast and of Nigeria. Since 1925 he has been Governor of Ceylon. Most of his writing has been concerned with the Malay country. His best known short stories are contained in the two volumes *Malayan Monochromes* and *The Further Side of Silence.*

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Mr. de la Mare is an Englishman, born in 1873. He was formerly known entirely as a poet, but has published novels and short stories as well. Among his books are *Poems, The Three Mulla-Mulgars, Peacock Pie, Down-adown-Derry, The Memoirs of a Midget, The Riddle and Other Stories,* and *The Connoisseur.*

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Mr. Dobie was born in San Francisco on March 15, 1881, and continues to live there. He has published three novels,

The Blood Red Dawn, Broken to the Plow, and *Less Than Kin.* He is a frequent contributor of short stories to *Harper's Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's Magazine,* and other periodicals.

H. G. Dwight. THE LEOPARD OF THE SEA 143

Mr. Dwight was born in Constantinople on August 6, 1875. He was graduated from Amherst College, but until 1914 lived chiefly in the Near East. In 1918 and 1919 he was with the Supreme War Council and the Peace Commission, and has recently been a Special Assistant in the State Department at Washington. Among his books are *Constantinople Old and New, Stamboul Nights, Persian Miniatures,* and *The Emperor of Elam.* He is a contributor to *Harper's* and other magazines.

F. Scott Fitzgerald. THE JELLY-BEAN 160

Mr. Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minn., on September 14, 1896. He attended Princeton University and now lives in France. His novels are *This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned,* and *The Great Gatsby.* He has also produced three volumes of short stories, *Flappers and Philosophers, Tales of the Jazz Age,* and *All the Sad Young Men.* His stories appear in *The Saturday Evening Post* and elsewhere.

Katharine Fullerton Gerould. THE WAX DOLL 185

Mrs. Gerould was born in Brockton, Mass. She was graduated from Radcliffe College and now lives in Princeton, New Jersey. She has written stories, essays, and verse for American magazines. Three volumes of her short stories have been collected, *Vain Oblations, The Great Tradition,* and *Valiant Dust.* She has also published a

book of essays and two books of travel, as well as three novels, *A Change of Air, Lost Valley,* and *Conquistador.*

Henry Sydnor Harrison. MISS HINCH 208

Mr. Harrison was born in Sewanee, Tenn., in 1880. He was graduated from Columbia University and now lives in New York City. He is known primarily as a novelist. Among his books are *Queed, V. V.'s Eyes, Angela's Business, When I Come Back, Saint Teresa,* and *Andrew Bride of Paris.*

Ernest Hemingway. A SEPARATE PEACE 234

Mr. Hemingway was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1897 and now lives in Paris. His first book was a collection of short stories entitled *In Our Time,* his second a satire called *Torrents of Spring,* and his latest a novel entitled *The Sun Also Rises.*

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Mr. Hughes is a young Englishman who has spent most of his time travelling about the world. He lived for some time in the Balkans. His poems, *Confessio Juvenis,* and his short stories, *A Moment of Time,* have been published in England, and a few of his stories have appeared in this country in *The Dial* and other magazines.

James Joyce. A PAINFUL CASE 278

Mr. Joyce was born in Dublin on February 2, 1882, and was graduated from Dublin University. He taught for a time in Trieste and now lives in Paris. His books are *Chamber Music* (verse), *Dubliners* (short stories), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (novel), *Exiles* (play), and *Ulysses.*

Ring Lardner. HAIRCUT 290

Mr. Lardner was born at Niles, Mich., on March 6, 1885. From 1905 to 1919 he was a reporter and sports writer in Chicago and New York. He now lives at Great Neck, N. Y. His books are *Bib Ballads, You Know Me, Al, Gullible's Travels, How To Write a Short Story,* and *The Love Nest.*

David Herbert Lawrence. TICKETS, PLEASE 305

Mr. Lawrence was born in Nottingham in 1885. He has travelled extensively, and lived for some time in the United States. He has written poetry, novels, plays, essays, and has translated considerably from other languages. Some of his better known books are *Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, The Lost Girl, Women in Love, The Plumed Serpent, St. Mawr, England, My England, The Prussian Officer, The Captain's Doll,* and *Sea and Sardinia.*

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Miss Katherine Beauchamp, who later became Mrs. John Middleton Murry, wrote under the pen name of "Katherine Mansfield." She was born in Australia, educated at Cambridge, and died tragically at Fontainbleau, France, in 1922. Not until shortly before her death was her work generally known. Among her books are *Bliss, The Garden Party, The Dove's Nest,* and *In a German Pension.*

John Masefield. THE SEAL MAN 334

Mr. Masefield is an Englishman who now lives at Oxford. He led an adventurous early life, sometimes on the sea, and for a period in New York. He is known primarily as a poet, but has written novels, plays, and history as well

as short stories. Among his many books of poetry are *The Everlasting Mercy, The Dauber, Reynard the Fox,* and *Enslaved.* His plays include *The Tragedy of Nan,* and *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great.* No more beautiful account of any phase of the war has been written than his *Gallipoli.*

Harvey O'Higgins. BIG DAN O'REILLY 339

Harvey O'Higgins, novelist, playwright, biographer, was born in Toronto on Nov. 14, 1876. He was graduated from the University of Toronto and now lives in New Jersey. Among his numerous books are *A Grand Army Man, Polygamy, From the Life, The Secret Springs,* and *Some Distinguished Americans.* He is a frequent contributor to various magazines.

John Russell. JETSAM 373

Mr. Russell was born in Davenport, Iowa, on April 22, 1885. He was graduated from Northwestern University. He has done newspaper work, directed the United States government propaganda in the British Isles, and travelled widely, mostly in the South Pacific. His official home is now Hollywood, California. He is best known for his two collections of exotic stories, *Where the Pavement Ends* and *In Dark Places.*

Wilbur Daniel Steele. A MAN'S A FOOL 397

Mr. Steele was born in Greensboro, N. C., on March 17, 1886. He was brought up in Colorado and attended Denver University. He later studied music in Boston and Paris and now lives at Nantucket, Mass. His stories appear regularly in the magazines, and he has also two novels to his credit, *Isles of the Blest* and *Taboo.* His collected short stories are entitled *Land's End, The Shame Dance,* and *Urkey Island.*

Edith Wharton. KERFOL 430

Mrs. Wharton was born in New York on Jan. 24, 1862. Her first volume of short stories was published in 1899, fourteen years after her marriage. For many years she has been living in her château near Paris. One of her novels, *The Age of Innocence,* won the Pulitzer prize in 1921. Among her best known books are *Ethan Frome, The House of Mirth, The Fruit of the Tree, The Custom of the Country, Xingu, Glimpses of the Moon, A Son at the Front,* and *Old New York.*

Ben Ames Williams. ONE CROWDED HOUR 461

Mr. Williams was born in Macon, Miss., on March 7, 1889, and was graduated from Dartmouth College in 1910. He now lives at Chestnut Hill, Mass. He is a frequent contributor to many magazines. Among his books are *All the Brothers Were Valiant, The Sea Bride, Evered,* and *Thrifty Stock.*

INTRODUCTION

Some twenty years ago Dr. Henry Seidel Canby wrote: "I shall select the work of one commanding figure, Rudyard Kipling, as the best means of illustrating what we have finally done with the short story." When Mr. Canby made this statement, he can scarcely have meant to convey the impression that the short story had developed to a point beyond which no further variations were to be expected, that the form had crystallized and become fixed for all time. He can surely have meant nothing of the kind, though his words imply as much, for any literary form to which something has been "finally done" is dead, and need be considered only as a monument of the past. The short story has suffered no such fate, nor does it seem likely to become a museum exhibit for a long time to come. It appears to satisfy writers and readers to-day just as it did half a dozen centuries ago, and to offer quite as many possibilities by way of experiment and innovation as it offered before Mr. Kipling showed what a genius could do with it. The end of the story, fortunately for us, is not yet.

With all this, no doubt, everyone will agree. Yet in technical discussions of the short story there is too frequently encountered a tendency to regard the form as "finally done" with. It is treated as if it were indeed finished and complete, susceptible of analysis and imitation, but not of new development. Recipes are even presented, by following

which—we must suppose—the perfect short story may be created. One fears that teachers sometimes adopt the same attitude, and furnish instruction not so much in how the story may be written as in how it has been written by recent masters. This is all very well, of course, by way of example, but it is certainly wrong by way of precept, for unless a form is really alive and capable of variation it is not worth cultivating except as a school exercise.

There would be no difficulty in showing by a review of the history of the short story that it has always changed with changing conditions. It has had its fashions; it has been sometimes simple and sometimes sophisticated, sometimes clumsily and sometimes deftly made; it has never lost its adaptability. There are short stories in the *Pantchatantra* and in the Old Testament as good after their kind as anything ever written. Chaucer, though he wrote in verse, came upon and used almost every device of the modern story-teller's art. Condensation, foreshortening, and emphasis are no more lacking in his work than in Maupassant's or Kipling's. The fashions do not matter, as long as the essentials of the art are there.

It is in the firm belief that the short story reached no finality in the work of the great masters who have passed, or are passing, that the present collection has been formed. During the last twenty-five years stories without number have been written. That the majority of them have been worthless performances is very true. The mechanics of the art have been at the command of every bright boy and girl; and the magazines and newspapers have been so ravenous for stories that they have printed without question a vast deal

of rubbish. The surprising thing is that the level of craftsmanship in the mediocre and stereotyped tales of our times has risen so high. The average magazine story may be conventional and imitative, but it is usually well constructed. At the same time, there has been going on a good deal of experimentation, some of it fruitless perhaps, but some of it extremely interesting not only for its own sake but for the evidence it gives that new ways of seeing human incident and new ways of dealing with it are still to be found.

The group of stories in this volume is in no sense intended to represent the "best" stories that have been written in the past twenty-five years. The editors have made no attempt to winnow the superlatively good from the great number of tales sincerely conceived and soundly executed that have been published. Any such attempt would be as futile as it would be presumptuous. The book is designed to present to the reader, however, as representative a selection as possible of the widely varying forms into which the short story has been running. Each story, we believe, is both interesting and admirable according to its kind, and each is distinctive. The variety of their excellence may perhaps come as a surprise to anyone who has not followed attentively the course of story-writing in the twentieth century. Their excellence as a group should, moreover, demonstrate convincingly the vitality of the *genre* and its worth as a subject for study.

Just as it is impossible to gather in one volume the absolutely best stories written in our time, it is inevitable that certain authors of well-deserved repute should for one reason or another fail to be included. The principle of selection adopted has been to illustrate as many tendencies as possible,

choosing at least one admirable specimen in each case. If readers miss stories which are favorites of their own, they should remember that the contents of this volume are intended as guide-posts to significant tendencies in story-writing rather than as an anthology of another sort. Even from the work of the authors here represented, the choice might have been different sometimes, had the end in view been less specific.

The editors make no apology for including in the book a few authors not yet well known. Although no volume of fiction by Richard Hughes, for instance, has yet been published in this country, the success of his *Lochinvárovič* warrants its selection as an example of what the younger English writers are doing. Similarly, Ernest Hemingway's brief tale represents a type of American experiment that should not be overlooked. Most of the names in the list, naturally, are so familiar to American readers that they need little comment. At the same time, it is hoped that the brief biographical statements printed in the table of contents may be found useful for reference.

G. H. G.

C. B. JR.

CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES

I WANT TO KNOW WHY [1]

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON

WE got up at four in the morning, that first day in the east. On the evening before we had climbed off a freight train at the edge of town, and with the true instinct of Kentucky boys had found our way across town and to the race track and the stables at once. Then we knew we were all right. Hanley Turner right away found a nigger we knew. It was Bildad Johnson who in the winter works at Ed Becker's livery barn in our home town, Beckersville. Bildad is a good cook as almost all our niggers are and of course he, like everyone in our part of Kentucky who is anyone at all, likes the horses. In the spring Bildad begins to scratch around. A nigger from our country can flatter and wheedle anyone into letting him do most anything he wants. Bildad wheedles the stable men and the trainers from the horse farms in our country around Lexington. The trainers come into town in the evening to stand around and talk and maybe get into a poker game. Bildad gets in with them. He is always doing little favors and telling about things to eat, chicken browned in a pan, and how is the best way to cook sweet potatoes and corn bread. It makes your mouth water to

1 From *The Triumph of the Egg,* by Sherwood Anderson. Copyright, 1921, by B. W. Huebsch, Inc. By permission of the author and the publishers.

hear him. When the racing season comes on and the horses go to the races and there is all the talk on the streets in the evenings about the new colts, and everyone says when they are going over to Lexington or to the spring meeting at Churchhill Downs or to Latonia, and the horsemen that have been down to New Orleans or maybe at the winter meeting at Havana in Cuba come home to spend a week before they start out again, at such a time when everything talked about in Beckersville is just horses and nothing else and the outfits start out and horse racing is in every breath of air you breathe, Bildad shows up with a job as cook for some outfit. Often when I think about it, his always going all season to the races and working in the livery barn in the winter where horses are and where men like to come and talk about horses, I wish I was a nigger. It's a foolish thing to say, but that's the way I am about being around horses, just crazy. I can't help it.

Well, I must tell you about what we did and let you in on what I'm talking about. Four of us boys from Beckersville, all whites and sons of men who live in Beckersville regular, made up our minds we were going to the races, not just to Lexington or Louisville, I don't mean, but to the big eastern track we were always hearing our Beckersville men talk about, to Saratoga. We were all pretty young then. I was just turned fifteen and I was the oldest of the four. It was my scheme. I admit that and I talked the others into trying it. There was Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton and myself. I had thirty-seven dollars I had earned during the winter working nights and Saturdays in Enoch Myer's grocery. Henry Rieback had eleven dollars and the others, Hanley and Tom, had only a dollar or two each. We fixed it all up and laid low until the Kentucky

spring meetings were over and some of our men, the sportiest ones, the ones we envied the most, had cut out—then we cut out too.

I won't tell you the trouble we had beating our way on freights and all. We went through Cleveland and Buffalo and other cities and saw Niagara Falls. We bought things there, souvenirs and spoons and cards and shells with pictures of the falls on them for our sisters and mothers, but thought we had better not send any of the things home. We didn't want to put the folks on our trail and maybe be nabbed.

We got into Saratoga as I said at night and went to the track. Bildad fed us up. He showed us a place to sleep in hay over a shed and promised to keep still. Niggers are all right about things like that. They won't squeal on you. Often a white man you might meet, when you had run away from home like that, might appear to be all right and give you a quarter or a half dollar or something, and then go right and give you away. White men will do that, but not a nigger. You can trust them. They are squarer with kids. I don't know why.

At the Saratoga meeting that year there were a lot of men from home. Dave Williams and Arthur Mulford and Jerry Myers and others. Then there was a lot from Louisville and Lexington Henry Rieback knew but I didn't. They were professional gamblers and Henry Rieback's father is one too. He is what is called a sheet writer and goes away most of the year to tracks. In the winter when he is home in Beckersville he don't stay there much but goes away to cities and deals faro. He is a nice man and generous, is always sending Henry presents, a bicycle and a gold watch and a boy scout suit of clothes and things like that.

My own father is a lawyer. He's all right, but don't make much money and can't buy me things and anyway I'm getting so old now I don't expect it. He never said nothing to me against Henry, but Hanley Turner and Tom Tumberton's fathers did. They said to their boys that money so come by is no good and they didn't want their boys brought up to hear gamblers' talk and be thinking about such things and maybe embrace them.

That's all right and I guess the men know what they are talking about, but I don't see what it's got to do with Henry or with horses either. That's what I'm writing this story about. I'm puzzled. I'm getting to be a man and want to think straight and be O.K., and there's something I saw at the race meeting at the eastern track I can't figure out.

I can't help it, I'm crazy about thoroughbred horses. I've always been that way. When I was ten years old and saw I was going to be big and couldn't be a rider I was so sorry I nearly died. Harry Hellinfinger in Beckersville, whose father is Postmaster, is grown up and too lazy to work, but likes to stand around in the street and get up jokes on boys like sending them to a hardware store for a gimlet to bore square holes and other jokes like that. He played one on me. He told me that if I would eat a half a cigar I would be stunted and not grow any more and maybe could be a rider. I did it. When father wasn't looking I took a cigar out of his pocket and gagged it down some way. It made me awful sick and the doctor had to be sent for, and then it did no good. I kept right on growing. It was a joke. When I told what I had done and why most fathers would have whipped me but mine didn't.

Well, I didn't get stunted and didn't die. It serves Harry

Hellinfinger right. Then I made up my mind I would like to be a stable boy, but had to give that up too. Mostly niggers do that work and I knew father wouldn't let me go into it. No use to ask him.

If you've never been crazy about thoroughbreds it's because you've never been around where they are much and don't know any better. They're beautiful. There isn't anything so lovely and clean and full of spunk and honest and everything as some race horses. On the big horse farms that are all around our town Beckersville there are tracks and the horses run in the early morning. More than a thousand times I've got out of bed before daylight and walked two or three miles to the tracks. Mother wouldn't of let me go but father always says, "Let him alone." So I got some bread out of the bread box and some butter and jam, gobbled it and lit out.

At the tracks you sit on the fence with men, whites and niggers, and they chew tobacco and talk, and then the colts are brought out. It's early and the grass is covered with shiny dew and in another field a man is plowing and they are frying things in a shed where the track niggers sleep, and you know how a nigger can giggle and laugh and say things that make you laugh. A white man can't do it and some niggers can't but a track nigger can every time.

And so the colts are brought out and some are just galloped by stable boys, but almost every morning on a big track owned by a rich man who lives maybe in New York, there are always, nearly every morning, a few colts and some of the old race horses and geldings and mares that are cut loose.

It brings a lump up into my throat when a horse runs. I don't mean all horses but some. I can pick them nearly every time. It's in my blood like in the blood of race track

niggers and trainers. Even when they just go slop-jogging along with a little nigger on their backs I can tell a winner. If my throat hurts and it's hard for me to swallow, that's him. He'll run like Sam Hill when you let him out. If he don't win every time it'll be a wonder and because they've got him in a pocket behind another or he was pulled or got off bad at the post or something. If I wanted to be a gambler like Henry Rieback's father I could get rich. I know I could and Henry says so too. All I would have to do is to wait 'til that hurt comes when I see a horse and then bet every cent. That's what I would do if I wanted to be a gambler, but I don't.

When you're at the tracks in the morning—not the race tracks but the training tracks around Beckersville—you don't see a horse, the kind I've been talking about, very often, but it's nice anyway. Any thoroughbred, that is sired right and out of a good mare and trained by a man that knows how, can run. If he couldn't what would he be there for and not pulling a plow?

Well, out of the stables they come and the boys are on their backs and it's lovely to be there. You hunch down on top of the fence and itch inside you. Over in the sheds the niggers giggle and sing. Bacon is being fried and coffee made. Everything smells lovely. Nothing smells better than coffee and manure and horses and niggers and bacon frying and pipes being smoked out of doors on a morning like that. It just gets you, that's what it does.

But about Saratoga. We was there six days and not a soul from home seen us and everything came off just as we wanted it to, fine weather and horses and races and all. We beat our way home and Bildad gave us a basket with fried

chicken and bread and other eatables in, and I had eighteen dollars when we got back to Beckersville. Mother jawed and cried but Pop didn't say much. I told everything we done except one thing. I did and saw that alone. That's what I'm writing about. It got me upset. I think about it at night. Here it is.

At Saratoga we laid up nights in the hay in the shed Bildad had showed us and ate with the niggers early and at night when the race people had all gone away. The men from home stayed mostly in the grandstand and betting field, and didn't come out around the places where the horses are kept except to the paddocks just before a race when the horses are saddled. At Saratoga they don't have paddocks under an open shed as at Lexington and Churchhill Downs and other tracks down in our country, but saddle the horses right out in an open place under trees on a lawn as smooth and nice as Banker Bohon's front yard here in Beckersville. It's lovely. The horses are sweaty and nervous and shine and the men come out and smoke cigars and look at them and the trainers are there and the owners, and your heart thumps so you can hardly breathe.

Then the bugle blows for post and the boys that ride come running out with their silk clothes on and you run to get a place by the fence with the niggers.

I always am wanting to be a trainer or owner, and at the risk of being seen and caught and sent home I went to the paddocks before every race. The other boys didn't but I did.

We got to Saratoga on a Friday and on Wednesday the next week the big Mullford Handicap was to be run. Middlestride was in it and Sunstreak. The weather was fine and the track fast. I couldn't sleep the night before.

What had happened was that both these horses are the kind it makes my throat hurt to see. Middlestride is long and looks awkward and is a gelding. He belongs to Joe Thompson, a little owner from home who only has a half dozen horses. The Mullford Handicap is for a mile and Middlestride can't untrack fast. He goes away slow and is always way back at the half, then he begins to run and if the race is a mile and a quarter he'll just eat up everything and get there.

Sunstreak is different. He is a stallion and nervous and belongs on the biggest farm we've got in our country, the Van Riddle place that belongs to Mr. Van Riddle of New York. Sunstreak is like a girl you think about sometimes but never see. He is hard all over and lovely too. When you look at his head you want to kiss him. He is trained by Jerry Tillford who knows me and has been good to me lots of times, lets me walk into a horse's stall to look at him close and other things. There isn't anything as sweet as that horse. He stands at the post quiet and not letting on, but he is just burning up inside. Then when the barrier goes up he is off like his name, Sunstreak. It makes you ache to see him. It hurts you. He just lays down and runs like a bird dog. There can't anything I ever see run like him except Middlestride when he gets untracked and stretches himself.

Gee! I ached to see that race and those two horses run, ached and dreaded it too. I didn't want to see either of our horses beaten. We had never sent a pair like that to the races before. Old men in Beckersville said so and the niggers said so. It was a fact.

Before the race I went over to the paddocks to see. I

looked a last look at Middlestride, who isn't such a much standing in a paddock that way, then I went to see Sunstreak.

It was his day. I knew when I see him. I forgot all about being seen myself and walked right up. All the men from Beckersville were there and no one noticed me except Jerry Tillford. He saw me and something happened. I'll tell you about that.

I was standing looking at that horse and aching. In some way, I can't tell how, I knew just how Sunstreak felt inside. He was quiet and letting the niggers rub his legs and Mr. Van Riddle himself put the saddle on, but he was just a raging torrent inside. He was like the water in the river at Niagara Falls just before it goes plunk down. That horse wasn't thinking about running. He don't have to think about that. He was just thinking about holding himself back 'til the time for the running came. I knew that. I could just in a way see right inside him. He was going to do some awful running and I knew it. He wasn't bragging or letting on much or prancing or making a fuss, but just waiting. I knew it and Jerry Tillford his trainer knew. I looked up and then that man and I looked into each other's eyes. Something happened to me. I guess I loved the man as much as I did the horse because he knew what I knew. Seemed to me there wasn't anything in the world but that man and the horse and me. I cried and Jerry Tillford had a shine in his eyes. Then I came away to the fence to wait for the race. The horse was better than me, more steadier, and now I know better than Jerry. He was the quietest and he had to do the running.

Sunstreak ran first of course and he busted the world's record for a mile. I've seen that if I never see anything

more. Everything came out just as I expected. Middlestride got left at the post and was way back and closed up to be second, just as I knew he would. He'll get a world's record too some day. They can't skin the Beckersville country on horses.

I watched the race calm because I knew what would happen. I was sure. Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton were all more excited than me.

A funny thing had happened to me. I was thinking about Jerry Tillford the trainer and how happy he was all through the race. I liked him that afternoon even more than I ever liked my own father. I almost forgot the horses thinking that way about him. It was because of what I had seen in his eyes as he stood in the paddocks beside Sunstreak before the race started. I knew he had been watching and working with Sunstreak since the horse was a baby colt, had taught him to run and be patient and when to let himself out and not to quit, never. I knew that for him it was like a mother seeing her child do something brave or wonderful. It was the first time I ever felt for a man like that.

After the race that night I cut out from Tom and Hanley and Henry. I wanted to be by myself and I wanted to be near Jerry Tillford if I could work it. Here is what happened.

The track in Saratoga is near the edge of town. It is all polished up and trees around, the evergreen kind, and grass and everything painted and nice. If you go past the track you get to a hard road made of asphalt for automobiles, and if you go along this for a few miles there is a road turns off to a little rummy looking farm house set in a yard.

That night after the race I went along that road because I

had seen Jerry and some other men go that way in an automobile. I didn't expect to find them. I walked for a ways and then sat down by a fence to think. It was the direction they went in. I wanted to be as near Jerry as I could. I felt close to him. Pretty soon I went up the side road—I don't know why—and came to the rummy farm house. I was just lonesome to see Jerry, like wanting to see your father at night when you were a young kid. Just then an automobile came along and turned in. Jerry was in it and Henry Rieback's father, and Arthur Bedford from home, and Dave Williams and two other men I didn't know. They got out of the car and went into the house, all but Henry Rieback's father who quarreled with them and said he wouldn't go. It was only about nine o'clock, but they were all drunk and the rummy looking farm house was a place for bad women to stay in. That's what it was. I crept up along a fence and looked through a window and saw.

It's what gives me the fantods. I can't make it out. The women in the house were all ugly mean-looking women, not nice to look at or be near. They were homely too, except one who was tall and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, but with a hard ugly mouth. She had red hair. I saw everything plain. I got up by an old rose bush by an open window and looked. The women had on loose dresses and sat around in chairs. The men came in and some sat on the women's laps. The place smelled rotten and there was rotten talk, the kind a kid hears around a livery stable in a town like Beckersville in the winter but don't ever expect to hear talked when there are women around. It was rotten. A nigger wouldn't go into such a place.

I looked at Jerry Tillford. I've told you how I had been feeling about him on account of his knowing what was going on inside of Sunstreak in the minute before he went to the post for the race in which he made a world's record.

Jerry bragged in that bad woman house as I know Sunstreak wouldn't never have bragged. He said that he made that horse, that it was him that won the race and made the record. He lied and bragged like a fool. I never heard such silly talk.

And then, what do you suppose he did! He looked at the woman in there, the one that was lean and hard-mouthed and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, and his eyes began to shine just as they did when he looked at me and at Sunstreak in the paddocks at the track in the afternoon. I stood there by the window—gee!—but I wished I hadn't gone away from the tracks, but had stayed with the boys and the niggers and the horses. The tall rotten looking woman was between us just as Sunstreak was in the paddocks in the afternoon.

Then, all of a sudden, I began to hate that man. I wanted to scream and rush in the room and kill him. I never had such a feeling before. I was so mad clean through that I cried and my fists were doubled up so my finger nails cut my hands.

And Jerry's eyes kept shining and he waved back and forth, and then he went and kissed that woman and I crept away and went back to the tracks and to bed and didn't sleep hardly any, and then next day I got the other kids to start home with me and never told them anything I seen.

I been thinking about it ever since. I can't make it out. Spring has come again and I'm nearly sixteen and go to the

tracks mornings same as always, and I see Sunstreak and Middlestride and a new colt named Strident I'll bet will lay them all out, but no one thinks so but me and two or three niggers.

But things are different. At the tracks the air don't taste as good or smell as good. It's because a man like Jerry Tillford, who knows what he does, could see a horse like Sunstreak run, and kiss a woman like that the same day. I can't make it out. Darn him, what did he want to do like that for? I keep thinking about it and it spoils looking at horses and smelling things and hearing niggers laugh and everything. Sometimes I'm so mad about it I want to fight someone. It gives me the fantods. What did he do it for? I want to know why.

A SOURCE OF IRRITATION [1]

by STACY AUMONIER

To look at old Sam Gates you would never suspect him of having nerves. His sixty-nine years of close application to the needs of the soil had given him a certain earthy stolidity. To observe him hoeing, or thinning out a broad field of turnips, hardly attracted one's attention, he seemed so much part and parcel of the whole scheme. He blended into the soil like a glorified swede. Nevertheless, the half-dozen people who claimed his acquaintance knew him to be a man who suffered from little moods of irritability.

And on this glorious morning a little incident annoyed him unreasonably. It concerned his niece, Aggie. She was a plump girl with clear blue eyes, and a face as round and inexpressive as the dumplings for which the country was famous. She came slowly across the long sweep of the downland and, putting down the bundle wrapped in a red handkerchief which contained his breakfast and dinner, she said:

"Well, Uncle, is there any noos?"

Now this may not appear to the casual reader to be a remark likely to cause irritation, but it affected old Sam Gates as a very silly and unnecessary question. It was, moreover, the constant repetition of it that was beginning to anger him.

1 By permission of the author.

He met his niece twice a day. In the morning she brought his bundle of food at seven, and when he passed his sister's cottage on the way home to tea at five she was invariably hanging about the gate, and she always said in the same voice:

"Well, Uncle, is there any noos?"

Noos! What noos should there be? For sixty-nine years he had never lived farther than five miles from Halversham. For nearly sixty of those years he had bent his back above the soil. There were, indeed, historic occasions. Once, for instance, when he had married Annie Hachet. And there was the birth of his daughter. There was also the famous occasion when he had visited London. Once he had been to a flower-show at Market Roughborough. He either went or didn't go to church on Sundays. He had had many interesting chats with Mr. James at the Cowman, and three years ago had sold a pig to Mrs. Way. But he couldn't always have interesting noos of this sort up his sleeve. Didn't the silly zany know that for the last three weeks he had been hoeing and thinning out turnips for Mr. Hodge on this very same field? What noos could there be?

He blinked at his niece, and didn't answer. She undid the parcel and said:

"Mrs. Goping's fowl got out again last night."

"Ah," he replied in a noncommittal manner and began to munch his bread and bacon. His niece picked up the handkerchief and, humming to herself, walked back across the field.

It was a glorious morning, and the white sea mist added to the promise of a hot day. He sat there munching, thinking of nothing in particular, but gradually subsiding into a mood of placid content. He noticed the back of Aggie disappear

in the distance. It was a mile to the cottage and a mile and a half to Halversham. Silly things, girls. They were all alike. One had to make allowances. He dismissed her from his thoughts, and took a long swig of tea out of a bottle. Insects buzzed lazily. He tapped his pocket to assure himself that his pouch of shag was there, and then he continued munching. When he had finished he lighted his pipe and stretched himself comfortably. He looked along the line of turnips he had thinned and then across the adjoining field of swedes. Silver streaks appeared on the sea below the mist. In some dim way he felt happy in his solitude amidst this sweeping immensity of earth and sea and sky.

And then something else came to irritate him: it was one of "these dratted airyplanes." "Airyplanes" were his pet aversion. He could find nothing to be said in their favor. Nasty, noisy, disfiguring things that seared the heavens and made the earth dangerous. And every day there seemed to be more and more of them. Of course "this old war" was responsible for a lot of them, he knew. The war was a "plaguy noosance." They were short-handed on the farm, beer and tobacco were dear, and Mrs. Steven's nephew had been and got wounded in the foot.

He turned his attention once more to the turnips; but an "airyplane" has an annoying genius for gripping one's attention. When it appears on the scene, however much we dislike it, it has a way of taking the stage-center. We cannot help constantly looking at it. And so it was with old Sam Gates. He spat on his hands and blinked up at the sky. And suddenly the aeroplane behaved in a very extraordinary manner. It was well over the sea when it seemed to lurch drunkenly and skimmed the water. Then it shot up at a

dangerous angle and zigzagged. It started to go farther out, and then turned and made for the land. The engines were making a curious grating noise. It rose once more, and then suddenly dived downward, and came plump down right in the middle of Mr. Hodge's field of swedes.

And then, as if not content with this desecration, it ran along the ground, ripping and tearing up twenty-five yards of good swedes, and then came to a stop.

Old Sam Gates was in a terrible state. The aeroplane was more than a hundred yards away, but he waved his arms and called out:

"Hi, you there, you mustn't land in the swedes! They're Mr. Hodge's."

The instant the aeroplane stopped, a man leaped out and gazed quickly around. He glanced at Sam Gates, and seemed uncertain whether to address him or whether to concentrate his attention on the flying machine. The latter arrangement appeared to be his ultimate decision. He dived under the engine and became frantically busy. Sam had never seen anyone work with such furious energy; but all the same it was not to be tolerated. It was disgraceful. Sam started out across the field, almost hurrying in his indignation. When he appeared within earshot of the aviator he cried out again:

"Hi! you mustn't rest your old airyplane here! You've kicked up all Mr. Hodge's swedes. A nice thing you've done!"

He was within five yards when suddenly the aviator turned and covered him with a revolver! And speaking in a sharp, staccato voice he said:

"Old Grandfather, you must sit down. I am very much

occupied. If you interfere or attempt to go away, I shoot you. So!"

Sam gazed at the horrid, glittering little barrel and gasped. Well, he never! To be threatened with murder when you're doing your duty in your employer's private property! But, still, perhaps the man was mad. A man must be more or less mad to go up in one of those crazy things. And life was very sweet on that summer morning despite sixty-nine years. He sat down among the swedes.

The aviator was so busy with his cranks and machinery that he hardly deigned to pay him any attention except to keep the revolver handy. He worked feverishly, and Sam sat watching him. At the end of ten minutes he appeared to have solved his troubles with the machine, but he still seemed very scared. He kept on glancing round and out to sea. When his repairs were complete he straightened his back and wiped the perspiration from his brow. He was apparently on the point of springing back into the machine and going off when a sudden mood of facetiousness, caused by relief from the strain he had endured, came to him. He turned to old Sam and smiled, at the same time remarking:

"Well, old Grandfather, and now we shall be all right, isn't it?"

He came close up to Sam, and then suddenly started back.

"*Gott!*" he cried, "Paul Jouperts!"

Bewildered, Sam gazed at him, and the madman started talking in some foreign tongue. Sam shook his head.

"You've no right," he remarked, "to come bargin' through they swedes o' Mr. Hodge's."

And then the aviator behaved in a most peculiar manner. He came up and examined Sam's face very closely, and gave

a sudden tug at his beard and hair, as if to see whether they were real or false.

"What is your name, old man?" he said.

"Sam Gates."

The aviator muttered some words which sounded something like "mare vudish" and then turned to his machine. He appeared to be dazed and in a great state of doubt. He fumbled with some cranks, but kept glancing at old Sam. At last he got into the car and strapped himself in. Then he stopped, and sat there deep in thought. At last he suddenly unstrapped himself and sprang out again and, approaching Sam, said very deliberately:

"Old Grandfather, I shall require you to accompany me."

Sam gasped.

"Eh?" he said. "What be talkin' about? 'Company? I got these 'ere loines o' turnips—I be already behoind—"

The disgusting little revolver once more flashed before his eyes.

"There must be no discussion," came the voice. "It is necessary that you mount the seat of the car without delay. Otherwise I shoot you like the dog you are. So!"

Old Sam was hale and hearty. He had no desire to die so ignominiously. The pleasant smell of the Norfolk downland was in his nostrils; his foot was on his native heath. He mounted the seat of the car, contenting himself with a mutter:

"Well, this be a noice thing, I must say! Flyin' about the country with all they turnips on'y half thinned!"

He found himself strapped in. The aviator was in a fever of anxiety to get away. The engines made a ghastly splutter and noise. The thing started running along the ground.

Suddenly it shot upward, giving the swedes a last contemptuous kick. At twenty minutes to eight that morning old Sam found himself being borne right up above his fields and out to sea! His breath came quickly. He was a little frightened.

"God forgive me!" he murmured.

The thing was so fantastic and sudden that his mind could not grasp it. He only felt in some vague way that he was going to die, and he struggled to attune his mind to the change. He offered up a mild prayer to God, Who, he felt, must be very near, somewhere up in these clouds. Automatically he thought of the vicar at Halversham, and a certain sense of comfort came to him at the reflection that on the previous day he had taken a "cookin' of runner beans" to God's representative in that village. He felt calmer after that, but the horrid machine seemed to go higher and higher. He could not turn in his seat, and he could see nothing but sea and sky. Of course the man was mad, mad as a March hare. Of what earthly use could *he* be to anyone? Besides, he had talked pure gibberish, and called him Paul something, when he had already told him his name was Sam. The thing would fall down into the sea soon, and they would both be drowned. Well, well, he had almost reached three-score years and ten. He was protected by a screen, but it seemed very cold. What on earth would Mr. Hodge say? There was no one left to work the land but a fool of a boy named Billy Whitehead at Dene's Cross. On, on, on they went at a furious pace. His thoughts danced disconnectedly from incidents of his youth, conversations with the vicar, hearty meals in the open, a frock his sister wore on the day of the

postman's wedding, the drone of a psalm, the illness of some ewes belonging to Mr. Hodge. Everything seemed to be moving very rapidly, upsetting his sense of time. He felt outraged, and yet at moments there was something entrancing in the wild experience. He seemed to be living at an incredible pace. Perhaps he was really dead and on his way to the kingdom of God. Perhaps this was the way they took people.

After some indefinite period he suddenly caught sight of a long strip of land. Was this a foreign country, or were they returning? He had by this time lost all feeling of fear. He became interested and almost disappointed. The "airyplane" was not such a fool as it looked. It was very wonderful to be right up in the sky like this. His dreams were suddenly disturbed by a fearful noise. He thought the machine was blown to pieces. It dived and ducked through the air, and things were bursting all around it and making an awful din, and then it went up higher and higher. After a while these noises ceased and he felt the machine gliding downward. They were really right above solid land—trees, fields, streams, and white villages. Down, down, down they glided. This was a foreign country. There were straight avenues of poplars and canals. This was not Halversham. He felt the thing glide gently and bump into a field. Some men ran forward and approached them, and the mad aviator called out to them. They were mostly fat men in gray uniforms, and they all spoke this foreign gibberish. Someone came and unstrapped him. He was very stiff and could hardly move. An exceptionally gross-looking man punched him in the ribs and roared with laughter. They all stood round and laughed

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at him, while the mad aviator talked to them and kept pointing to him. Then he said:

"Old Grandfather, you must come with me."

He was led to an iron-roofed building and shut in a little room. There were guards outside with fixed bayonets. After a while the mad aviator appeared again, accompanied by two soldiers. He beckoned him to follow. They marched through a quadrangle and entered another building. They went straight into an office where a very important-looking man, covered with medals, sat in an easy chair. There was a lot of saluting and kicking of heels. The aviator pointed at Sam and said something, and the man with the medals started at sight of him, and then came up and spoke to him in English.

"What is your name? Where do you come from? Your age? The name and birthplace of your parents?"

He seemed intensely interested, and also pulled his hair and beard to see if they came off. So well and naturally did he and the aviator speak English that after a voluble examination they drew apart, and continued the conversation in that language. And the extraordinary conversation was of this nature:

"It is a most remarkable resemblance," said the man with medals. "*Unglaublich!* But what do you want me to do with him, Hausemann?"

"The idea came to me suddenly, Excellency," replied the aviator, "and you may consider it worthless. It is just this. The resemblance is so amazing. Paul Jouperts has given us more valuable information than anyone at present in our service, and the English know that. There is an award of

five thousand francs on his head. Twice they have captured him, and each time he escaped. All the company commanders and their staff have his photograph. He is a serious thorn in their flesh."

"Well?" replied the man with the medals.

The aviator whispered confidentially:

"Suppose, your Excellency, that they found the dead body of Paul Jouperts?"

"Well?" replied the big man.

"My suggestion is this. Tomorrow, as you know, the English are attacking Hill 701, which for tactical reasons we had decided to evacuate. If after the attack they find the dead body of Paul Jouperts in, say, the second lines, they will take no further trouble in the matter. You know their lack of thoroughness. Pardon me, I was two years at Oxford University. And consequently Paul Jouperts will be able to prosecute his labors undisturbed."

The man with the medals twirled his mustache and looked thoughtfully at his colleague.

"Where is Paul at the moment?" he asked.

"He is acting as a gardener at the Convent of St. Eloise, at Mailleton-en-haut, which, as you know, is one hundred meters from the headquarters of the British central army staff."

The man with the medals took two or three rapid turns up and down the room, then he said:

"Your plan is excellent, Hausemann. The only point of difficulty is that the attack started this morning."

"This morning?" exclaimed the other.

"Yes; the English attacked unexpectedly at dawn. We

have already evacuted the first line. We shall evacuate the second line at eleven-fifty. It is now ten-fifteen. There may be just time."

He looked suddenly at old Sam in the way that a butcher might look at a prize heifer at an agricultural show and remarked casually:

"Yes, it is a remarkable resemblance. It seems a pity not to—do something with it."

Then, speaking in German, he added:

"It is worth trying. And if it succeeds, the higher authorities shall hear of your lucky accident and inspiration, Herr Hausemann. Instruct *Ober-Lieutenant* Schultz to send the old fool by two orderlies to the east extremity of Trench 38. Keep him there till the order of evacuation is given, then shoot him, but don't disfigure him, and lay him face upward."

The aviator saluted and withdrew, accompanied by his victim. Old Sam had not understood the latter part of the conversation, and he did not quite catch all that was said in English; but he felt that somehow things were not becoming too promising, and it was time to assert himself. So he remarked when he got outside:

"Now, look 'ee 'ere, Mister, when am I goin' to get back to my turnips?"

And the aviator replied, with a pleasant smile:

"Do not be disturbed, old Grandfather. You shall get back to the soil quite soon."

In a few moments he found himself in a large gray car, accompanied by four soldiers. The aviator left him. The country was barren and horrible, full of great pits and rents, and he could hear the roar of artillery and the shriek of shells.

Overhead, aeroplanes were buzzing angrily. He seemed to be suddenly transported from the kingdom of God to the pit of darkness. He wondered whether the vicar had enjoyed the runner beans. He could not imagine runner beans growing here; runner beans, aye, or anything else. If this was a foreign country, give him dear old England!

Gr-r-r! bang! Something exploded just at the rear of the car. The soldiers ducked, and one of them pushed him in the stomach and swore.

"An ugly-lookin' lout," he thought. "If I wor twenty years younger, I'd give him a punch in the eye that 'u'd make him sit up."

The car came to a halt by a broken wall. The party hurried out and dived behind a mound. He was pulled down a kind of shaft, and found himself in a room buried right underground, where three officers were drinking and smoking. The soldiers saluted and handed them a typewritten dispatch. The officers looked at him drunkenly, and one came up and pulled his beard and spat in his face and called him "an old English swine." He then shouted out some instructions to the soldiers, and they led him out into the narrow trench. One walked behind him, and occasionally prodded him with the butt-end of a gun. The trenches were half full of water and reeked of gases, powder, and decaying matter. Shells were constantly bursting overhead, and in places the trenches had crumbled and were nearly blocked up. They stumbled on, sometimes falling, sometimes dodging moving masses, and occasionally crawled over the bodies of dead men. At last they reached a deserted-looking trench, and one of the soldiers pushed him into the corner of it and growled something, and then disappeared

round the angle. Old Sam was exhausted. He leaned panting against the mud wall, expecting every minute to be blown to pieces by one of those infernal things that seemed to be getting more and more insistent. The din went on for nearly twenty minutes, and he was alone in the trench. He fancied he heard a whistle amidst the din. Suddenly one of the soldiers who had accompanied him came stealthily around the corner, and there was a look in his eye old Sam did not like. When he was within five yards the soldier raised his rifle and pointed it at Sam's body. Some instinct impelled the old man at that instant to throw himself forward on his face. As he did so he was aware of a terrible explosion, and he had just time to observe the soldier falling in a heap near him, and then he lost consciousness.

His consciousness appeared to return to him with a snap. He was lying on a plank in a building, and he heard someone say:

"I believe the old boy's English."

He looked round. There were a lot of men lying there, and others in khaki and white overalls were busy among them. He sat up, rubbed his head, and said:

"Hi, Mister, where be I now?"

Someone laughed, and a young man came up and said:

"Well, old man, you were very nearly in hell. Who are you?"

Someone came up, and two of them were discussing him. One of them said:

"He's quite all right. He was only knocked out. Better take him in to the colonel. He may be a spy."

The other came up, touched his shoulder, and remarked:

"Can you walk, Uncle?"

He replied:

"Aye, I can walk all roight."

"That's the old sport!"

The young man took his arm and helped him out of the room into a courtyard. They entered another room, where an elderly, kind-faced officer was seated at a desk. The officer looked up and exclaimed:

"Good God, Bradshaw! Do you know who you've got there?"

The younger one said:

"No. Who, sir?"

"It's Paul Jouperts!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Paul Jouperts! Great Scott!"

The older officer addressed himself to Sam. He said:

"Well, we've got you once more, Paul. We shall have to be a little more careful this time."

The young officer said:

"Shall I detail a squad, sir?"

"We can't shoot him without a court-martial," replied the kind-faced senior.

Then Sam interpolated:

"Look 'ee 'ere, sir, I'm fair sick of all this. My name bean't Paul. My name's Sam. I was a-thinnin' a loine o' turnips—"

Both officers burst out laughing, and the younger one said:

"Good! Good! Isn't it amazing, sir, the way they not only learn the language, but even take the trouble to learn a dialect!"

The older man busied himself with some papers.

"Well, Sam," he remarked, "you shall be given a chance to prove your identity. Our methods are less drastic than

those of your *Boche* masters. What part of England are you supposed to come from? Let's see how much you can bluff us with your topographical knowledge."

"I was a-thinnin' a loine o' turnips this mornin' at 'alf-past seven on Mr. Hodge's farm at Halversham when one o' these 'ere airyplanes come down among the swedes. I tells 'e to get clear out o' that, when the feller what gets out o' the car 'e drahs a revowlver an' 'e says, 'You must 'company I—' "

"Yes, yes," interrupted the senior officer; "that's all very good. Now tell me—where is Halversham? What is the name of the local vicar? I'm sure you'd know that."

Old Sam rubbed his chin.

"I sits under the Reverend David Pryce, Mister, and a good, God-fearin' man he be. I took him a cookin' o' runner beans on'y yesterday. I works for Mr. Hodge, what owns Greenway Manor and 'as a stud-farm at Newmarket, they say."

"Charles Hodge?" asked the young officer.

"Aye, Charlie Hodge. You write and ask un if he knows old Sam Gates."

The two officers looked at each other and the older one looked at Sam more closely.

"It's very extraordinary," he remarked.

"Everybody knows Charlie Hodge," added the young officer.

It was at that moment that a wave of genius swept over old Sam. He put his hand to his head and suddenly jerked out:

"What's more, I can tell 'ee where this yere Paul is. He's actin' a gardner in a convent at—" He puckered up his brows, fumbled with his hat, and then got out, "Mighteno."

The older officer gasped.

"Mailleton-en-haut! Good God! what makes you say that, old man?"

Sam tried to give an account of his experience and the things he had heard said by the German officers; but he was getting tired, and he broke off in the middle to say:

"Ye haven't a bite o' something to eat, I suppose, Mister; or a glass o' beer? I usually 'as my dinner at twelve o'clock."

Both officers laughed, and the older said:

"Get him some food, Bradshaw, and a bottle of beer from the mess. We'll keep this old man here. He interests me."

While the younger man was doing this, the chief pressed a button and summoned another junior officer.

"Gateshead," he remarked, "ring up G.H.Q. and instruct them to arrest the gardener in that convent at the top of the hill and then to report."

The officer saluted and went out, and in a few minutes a tray of hot food and a large bottle of beer were brought to the old man, and he was left alone in the corner of the room to negotiate this welcome compensation. And in the execution he did himself and his country credit. In the meanwhile the officers were very busy. People were coming and going and examining maps, and telephone bells were ringing furiously. They did not disturb old Sam's gastric operations. He cleaned up the mess tins and finished the last drop of beer. The senior officer found time to offer him a cigarette, but he replied:

"Thank 'ee kindly, sir, but I'd rather smoke my pipe."

The colonel smiled and said:

"Oh, all right; smoke away."

He lighted up, and the fumes of the shag permeated the room. Someone opened another window, and the young

officer who had addressed him at first suddenly looked at him and exclaimed:

"Innocent! You couldn't get shag like that anywhere but in Norfolk."

It must have been an hour later when another officer entered and saluted.

"Mesage from G.H.Q., sir," he said.

"Well?"

"They have arrested the gardener at the convent of St. Eloise, and they have every reason to believe that he is the notorious Paul Jouperts."

The colonel stood up, and his eyes beamed. He came over to old Sam and shook his hand.

"Mr. Gates," he said, "you are an old brick. You will probably hear more of this. You have probably been the means of delivering something very useful into our hands. Your own honour is vindicated. A loving government will probably award you five shillings or the Victoria Cross or something of that sort. In the meantime, what can I do for you?"

Old Sam scratched his chin.

"I want to get back 'ome," he said.

"Well, even that might be arranged."

"I want to get back 'ome in toime for tea."

"What time do you have tea?"

"Foive o'clock or thereabouts."

"I see."

A kindly smile came into the eyes of the colonel. He turned to another officer standing by the table and said:

"Raikes, is any one going across this afternoon with dispatches?"

"Yes, sir," replied the other officer. "Commander Jennings is leaving at three o'clock."

"You might ask him if he could see me."

Within ten minutes a young man in a flight-commander's uniform entered.

"Ah, Jennings," said the colonel. "Here is a little affair which concerns the honour of the British army. My friend here, Sam Gates, has come over from Halversham, in Norfolk, in order to give us valuable information. I have promised him that he shall get home to tea at five o'clock. Can you take a passenger?"

The young man threw back his head and laughed.

"Lord!" he exclaimed, "what an old sport! Yes, I expect I can manage it. Where is the forsaken place?"

A large ordnance-map of Norfolk (which had been captured from a German officer) was produced, and the young man studied it closely.

At three o'clock precisely old Sam, finding himself something of a hero and quite glad to escape from the embarrassment which his position entailed upon him, once more sped skyward in a "dratted airyplane."

At twenty minutes to five he landed once more among Mr. Hodge's swedes. The breezy young man shook hands with him and departed inland. Old Sam sat down and surveyed his familiar field of turnips.

"A noice thing, I must say!" he muttered to himself as he looked along the lines of unthinned turnips. He still had twenty minutes, and so he went slowly along and completed a line which he had begun in the morning. He then deliberately packed up his dinner things and his tools and started out for home.

As he came round the corner of Stillway's meadow and the cottage came in view, his niece stepped out of the copse with a basket on her arm.

"Well, Uncle," she said, "is there any noos?"

It was then that old Sam really lost his temper.

"Noos!" he said. "Noos! Drat the girl! What noos should there be? Sixty-nine years' I live in these 'ere parts, hoein' an' weedin' an' thinnin', an' mindin' Charlie Hodge's sheep. Am I one o' these 'ere story-book folk havin' noos 'appen to me all the time? Ain't it enough, ye silly, dab-faced zany, to earn enough to buy a bite o' some'at to eat and a glass o' beer and a place to rest a's head o' night without always wantin' noos, noos, noos! I tell 'ee it's this that leads 'ee to 'alf the troubles in the world. Devil take the noos!"

And turning his back on her, he went fuming up the hill.

THE LA PERONNIERE LETTERS [1]

by ELIZABETH BIBESCO

TO HERBERT CROLY

MADEMOISELLE DE LA PERONNIERE very rarely left the country. There was, she felt, something so disconcerting about Paris, a kind of feeling of never quite fitting into one's socket.

She could not stay with her niece, the Duchesse, because the Duchesse kept open house, and if there was one thing that Mlle. de la Peronniere disliked more than another, it was open house. She liked to be able to place people, to fit them tidily into a neat jigsaw; and if there are two categories of people whom it is impossible to place, they are celebrities, with their habit of sprawling about the picture as if there were no frame at all, and strangers; of these two ingredients the Duchesse's salon was largely composed. Of course, in addition to the well known and the unknown, there were always habitués, but there is nothing particularly comfortable about somebody else's habitués. Even though their faces become oppressively familiar, they remain locked boxes, full of mysterious allusions, tinkling old jokes and mellow, rather musty associations.

"It is no good, Marie Louise, I like neither the over-known nor the under-known," and Mlle. de la Peronniere would con-

1 From *The Whole Story,* copyright, 1926, by Elizabeth Bibesco, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. By permission of the author.

sider a quiet hotel. But here, again, difficulties presented themselves; quiet, old-fashioned hotels were curiously unwelcoming of Alcibiades, the griffon, and Xanthippe, the parrot.

So Mademoiselle would return to the country, wearing thick woollen stockings above her boots, from which she would extract in the restaurant car a bottle of burgundy, for only thus, she maintained, could it acquire the proper temperature.

Arrived at the wall that encased her domain—it never gave you the sense of a termination, but rather of an emphasis, an indication that you were about to approach the Holy of Holies—she would sigh with pleasure, as indeed she well might, for the wall was an exceptionally beautiful one, putty coloured, with a design of scrolls in red brick, and when she reached her blazing parterre of begonias Mlle. de la Peronniere would smile. Many an ardent gardener had had designs on the parterre. "But, my dear," she would say, "undeceive yourself; it is not meant to be a flower-bed. Gravel is a floor—those begonias are simply a carpet that I have nailed down."

The château was Louis XIII, not too big, but with an "air"; the parquet, the chandeliers, the family portraits—all seemed to hold themselves with a magic, lost air of deportment, to be on the brink of emerging from their background of courtesy in order to perform some especially exquisite and appropriate gesture.

There was a sense of continuity about the house. The red-gold squares of light, reflected through the window-panes on to the carpet, seemed not so much to be newly contributed each afternoon as found again where the sun had left them; the linen, the silver, the pot-pourri and the china were the visible links of some endless chain which stretched back into a dim, unfathomed past.

At every meal a place was laid for a stranger, a tradition of hospitality that had never been broken—though it was undeniably not a house that anyone would ever have dreamt of "dropping into," and at nine each night a lamp was brought in and put next to Mademoiselle's chair. This lamp was the gift of her old neighbour (and some said lover), the Count de X. Every Christmas each would give to the other a lamp and a book—always the same lamp and the same book. On Christmas Eve Jules (from Mademoiselle) and Gaston (from the Count) would cross in the dusk carrying their precious burdens.

In the evenings Mademoiselle would bring out her lingerie, adding stitches here and there. "I know the weak spots of a camisole," she would say. And in thus strengthening the transitory, she would forge yet another link in that strong chain of continuity which seemed to have bound time itself. Whether she believed in immortality or not, she treated mortality in a very cavalier, high-handed way.

Visitors rarely stayed at the château. The Duchesse came once a year, tall and fair and charming, with a large lissomness, radiating her own superabundant happiness, lending her clothes and her maid to the *jeunes filles* of the neighbourhood, gardening all day in the boiling heat ("without a veil," the ladies would murmur to one another), taking away cooking recipes, jam-making recipes and embroidery stitches, and leaving behind a jumble of books and shawls, bags and buckles, fluffy, transparent covers to keep your legs warm on sofas, and absurd dressing-jackets, all marabou and lace, designed—in the opinion of Mademoiselle—to keep you hot in summer and cold in winter.

It was impossible not to love Marie Louise, but to say that she fitted into the neighbourhood would undoubtedly be an exaggeration. As her aunt said, she lacked measure, and for weeks after one of her visits elderly ladies might be seen going out to dinner in apple-green shawls, while their daughters dragged their hair back from the forehead or wore it *à la vierge* with so authoritative an air that no one would ever have suspected that, a few weeks before, a happy hold-all would best have described their particular method of coiffure.

Mlle. de la Peronniere herself underwent none of these modifications. She had two dresses, a black satin and a black taffeta, the better of the two becoming, by an automatic process, the every-day of the next year. Thus in 1900 Mademoiselle wore black satin *pour les jours de fête*, and in 1901 she donned her black taffeta for great occasions, thus achieving that touch of variety without which dressing can never be an art.

The amenities at Argençon were observed with a certain stately rigidity. Nowhere was the tradition of tight exclusiveness that dominates French provincial society more rigorously upheld. True, during the yearly visit of the Duchesse certain fences were trampled down, curious new currents of air (subsequently dismissed as draughts) would circulate in the neighbourhood, but she never stayed long enough for any permanent harm to be done. Windows were shut again, barriers raised, and "polite" society was no longer contaminated by the insidious poison of a world that had made such reckless progress in the execrated arts of learning and forgetting.

To Argençon the French Revolution was an historical

event, and, like all historical events, probably largely an invention. The Nineteenth Century had been a pity, but by averting its eyes from the more distressing features, Argençon had been able to ignore with well-bred indifference the *arriviste* tendencies of science and the untidy sprawlings of liberty.

Life flowed along evenly; marriages were arranged, preceded by settlements, and followed by families—small families, because Argençon was moderate in everything. The ladies, as a rule, were amiable and resigned, easily absorbed in a monumental series of small interests, and, if their husbands were unfaithful, had they not, at any rate, the good taste to confine their infidelities to Bordeaux or to Paris?

The real nature of Bordeaux and Paris could only be a matter of dim speculation, for on the rare occasions when these ladies visited such theatres of sin, they entered at once a preserve of relations or connections, and "life" resolved itself rather bleakly into a railway station, some lamps, the illuminated windows of the shops, and a possible visit to the opera.

But Mlle. de la Peronniere was different. She had known the *grand monde*, and she had not forgotten it. She had perhaps had a lover, but she had certainly not had a husband. She had refused to be arranged for, and her mixture of the autocratic and the tender had not been a recommendation. Her tenderness, indeed, could only be divined by the heart's eye, while her domineering manner and her caustic tongue ("unwomanly," she had been labelled in her youth) put the riches of her nature out of the range of the narrow, shallow visions that surrounded her.

Nevertheless, Mademoiselle had had two great passions in

her life; first, for the violet-eyed, fairytale sister who had died with her first baby; and then for that baby, her nephew, Achille.

Achille? How is one to describe Achille, with his cane and his monocle, his absurdity and his elegance, his wit and his rubbish—the whole of his personality a permanent trysting place of the ridiculous and the sublime?

What is a man of the world? Not a man of wide, open spaces and vast, distant horizons, but a man who can confine civilization within the limits of his own special cage, who can erect his own gilt bars, sprinkle his own inverted commas, understanding everything, even the essential; never impressed, never disconcerted, knowing that dreams are the salt of disillusion, and that plovers' eggs are uneatable without bread and butter; cosmopolitan, unless you happen to be French, and, in that case, most exquisitely and provincially Parisian, counting, in fact, the universe well lost if you have gained the world.

Achille had probably been born in the wrong century. He was essentially a wit, but what place is there for a wit in this age of hurry and interruption, theft and misquotation? His writing was exquisite, with a fine polish of sterile finish. Painting he had given up. "I never could keep my promise," he explained.

His liaisons were legion, but twenty mistresses cannot make a lover; and, if his shy senses would frequently refuse to be prodded by brave words, his empty heart afforded him no refuge.

Fortunately, the field of retrospect was always open to him. A boast, a hint, a witticism: is it not thus that pictures are evoked; is there not some poetic justice in giving

immortality where there was no life? If he could smile away a woman's reputation, did it not, after all, prove that his smile was more convincing than her virtue?

What relevance has action—a brutish, clumsy thing, anonymous and easily forgotten?

"Your values are all wrong," he would say. "If I imagine that I have had a woman, have I not had her? If I forget that she was my mistress, then, clearly, she can never really have been it, for she has left me nothing. No truth is a truth until it has been distorted or transfigured into a masterpiece. Life does not exist until you have transmuted it into living."

Perhaps it could not be denied that Achille possessed the art of living. And yet sometimes it seemed more of a game than an art, a precise and dominating pattern from which he could not escape. In everything he did the unexpected would appear with the automatic regularity of a mechanical toy. He was not so much original as "an original," and his improvisations had the wit and neatness of an inspired birthday book—they were startlingly apposite and surprisingly unilluminating.

He had the cynic's capacity for taking things prodigiously seriously. As an arbiter of taste, as a leader of fashion, everything was immensely important. Those two great functions—accepting and rejecting—must always be approached with reverence. To the serious-minded so few things are serious—the world seethes with irrelevance. To Achille everything, from the Vatican to his button-hole, was momentous. There were in his life no unconsidered trifles—they had all been considered, though many had been condemned.

"*Il n'y a pas de questions de sentiment*," he would say, a little sententiously; he had his full share of the incurable sententiousness of wits. "*Il n'y a que des questions de goût.*"

Feelings were to him like escaped lunatics—dangerous, ridiculous things that should be kept in locked cells of disciplined, meticulous behaviour. Passion was admirable; eccentricity could be employed with advantage; flamboyant pranks of the imagination were always to be encouraged; but your heart, if you had a heart, should never appear; it was altogether too *mal porté*—as bad as a feather in a hat.

Thus Achille lived his life, inventing the conquests he had not made, yawning at his easier victories, dreaming perhaps, for he had a touch of a poet, of passionate defeats, surrendering only to the inanimate.

His house was famed for its beauty—a dim, unobtrusive beauty—candle-lit, yielding with slow secretiveness the revelation of each perfect detail. Here he would give parties where friends would rediscover one another, where unrealised thoughts would pop from their hiding-places, and enemies were at last able to satisfy their unacknowledged longing to talk to one another.

After all, perhaps it is difficult to do justice to Achille.

Frequently he quarrelled, hoping that the very act of disagreement would give seriousness to his sentiments, but in the two duels he fought honour was easily satisfied; indeed, her complaisance was such, rumour asserted, that her total demands had resolved themselves into a sling. It was, after all, more important to be a fine gentleman, than a gentleman.

To Mlle. de la Peronniere he represented many things. How hard, how busily we try to find out something about

that mystery of mysteries, the relations between any two human beings. Even the simplest—a happy marriage (as if happiness were ever easy), an unhappy marriage (as if unhappiness were ever simple)—leave us altogether out of it, seeing, perhaps, a communicating smile, a sidelong sneer, but none of those complete communions which hide themselves in secretive security before even the most loving audiences, flaunting themselves only in that perfect isolation where forfeits are not demanded and pledges are not required.

To Mlle. de la Peronniere Achille was so many things that no one else could see—a baby in long clothes, a child in a cot, a little boy playing with rabbits. And then, too, he was his mother—her tired eyes, her months of *malaise*, her unhusbanded pain. And he was the things that she had been before—her slow smile, that crept forward with such a conviction of delight, her gurgling, irresponsible laugh.

There are many people to whom life is not worth living unless they can also believe in immortality.

To Mlle. de la Peronniere, her sister Lili's triumphant perfection would have suffered an eternal defeat had she not left behind her a supreme vindication in the shape of Achille.

Without Achille there was no Lili—therefore, Achille inevitably became a number of things that not even the hopes of his dearest friends or the imaginings of his most envious enemies could have conceived.

Achille, too, had made a picture for himself, and to this picture he resolutely lived up. He had that ascetic dedication to a pose which is so essentially French. There is nothing self-indulgent in sacrificing your impulses on an altar of artificiality. The rôle for which he had cast himself,

and which he had so triumphantly created, demanded continuous attention, and, conscientious artist that he was, Achille was never tired of perfecting the details of his performance.

"*Comme c'est ennuyeux d'avoir toujours raison,*" he would say—"What a disaster to have an intelligence like mine. Nothing escapes it, not even I myself."

Occasionally he would visit Mlle. de la Peronniere. She was, after all, a *tante à héritage,* and he had a Frenchman's profound respect for money. To make an inheritance, why, it was a duty. One must make sacrifices in life. Tante Amélie, too, was excellent company. There were compensations—her cellar, for instance—and he would be able to return to Paris with marvellous descriptions of himself seated on a footstool at the feet of an old lady who hummed Mendelssohn and recited Racine. As a matter of fact, Mademoiselle disliked music, and read by preference Rabelais, Voltaire, and Charles Louis Philippe, but it was not on those lines that Achille enjoyed describing her. He dressed her in old lace, with Millet's "Angelus" on one side and Gounod's "Ave Maria" on the other. He believed that one should get as many results as possible—a yearly visit to a delightful woman whose wits were as sharp, if not sharper, than his own, and a return to Paris with the legend of an old lady like a pressed pansy, with dim eyes which flashed at the name of Napoleon, and a tinkling, broken old voice at the service only of her King and her God.

Marie Louise, of course, would say "nonsense," but Marie Louise was not an artist, and her truths would inevitably not carry as far as his inventions.

Poor Marie Louise with her "open house," so open that,

Achille maintained, it ceased to be a house at all, and became a shelter in a street, a porch where casual people took refuge from the rain, and where there was as much intimacy and selection as you might find in a dentist's waiting-room. "My poor cousin has so much heart," he would say; and he said "heart" in the same tone of voice with which he might have said "heart-disease."

Marie Louise, in her turn, would write to her aunt: "Achille is impossible. What sense is there in a life without feeling? And, to use his own standards, what variety?"

Mlle. de la Peronniere would smile a little. Marie Louise was a charming creature, warm-hearted, impulsive, "large," but, of course, she couldn't understand Achille—Achille with his exquisitely attuned perceptions, so much too sensitive and too delicate for the clumsy manifestations of modern behaviour. Mademoiselle would remember the times when he had stayed with her—his attentive courtesy, his intellectual directness wrapped in a semi-transparent fancifulness. How much she enjoyed talking to him in the evenings, breathing once more the air of the big world, and yet feeling it to be circumscribed by just those standards which divide the salon from the menagerie.

"Marie Louise is not like us," Achille would say, and there was to Mlle. de la Peronniere something so flattering, so reassuring, about that "us," as if the difference in their generations could never prevent them from both carrying aloft the same banner of the absolute.

"Our communion is perfect," she would explain. "He has been more than a son to me, for I have never had those terrible opportunities of being right, the memory of which so often comes between parents and children."

The Count de X. would shake his head. To him Achille was a puppy; his manner the foolish exaggeration of manners he had never known. "He is too *fin de siècle* for the beginning of a new century," he would say. "But why live forward?" Mademoiselle would protest: "Civilisation belongs to the past. Progress is just the noisy substitute of people without leisure to think." "Yes," her old friend would agree; "progress is a *pis aller*. But, *chère amie,* time is evolution—Achille is sterile." She wouldn't admit it.

"Think of our lamps," he would add. "I sit by your lamp, and you sit by mine. Lying by my bed is your gift of the *Pensées de Pascal.* Lying by your bed is my present of the same volume. They are my thoughts and your thoughts; it is your light and my light. We do not really need a lamp or a book. I could not turn out your glow, or shut up your dreams. But Achille is not like that. Achille exists for himself and by himself. He has none of the secret reasons of the heart, none of the tentative, flowering doubts of the imagination. Dearest friend, be warned, Achille is not a human being."

But she would only smile and shake her head.

"After all, I know," she would murmur to herself, "because I love him and he loves me."

. . . . . .

"But yes, it is good to be back from the wilds—America only exists to reveal Europe to us. Europe was created to show us France by; France is a wilderness that leads to Paris."

"A wilderness?"

"Sublime if you like. But to me the provinces are one

long toboggan-run down which I slide to the Place de la Concorde."

"And your aunt?"

"She is very well, I thank you."

"She can hope to live for many years?"

"For many years."

"The old live for ever."

"What should kill them? They have forgotten how to love, perhaps they never knew how to think—a diet of failing memory and increasing piety is no strain on the constitution."

"Ah, she is pious, your Aunt Amélie?"

"She believes in her God, her King, and her nephew."

"And has she never loved?"

"But, of course, there is a lover; an old man, a neighbour, with a cracked voice and a snuff-box and a stick—like a bad ballet, you understand. Every Christmas he sends her a lamp and Pascal's *Pensées*. Every Christmas she sends him a lamp and Pascal's *Pensées*."

"But their houses must be full of lamps and Pascal."

"You misunderstand me. There are only two lamps and two books in circulation. They change houses once a year."

"But it is the most charming story in the world."

"Bah! Why these economies of thought and feeling? It is all so *province*. There are photographs in the house with pressed pansies under the glass, and my aunt wears black lace mittens. Whenever she says good-bye to me she murmurs: 'Promise to believe in God and serve your King.' Why not? There are many gods, and I can best serve my King by not espousing his cause."

"How admirable."

"My aunt wears beautiful old lace caps and a rosary of carved mother-of-pearl beads. In the evenings she reads Chateaubriand out loud, and when she passes a military band playing the Marseillaise she stops her ears. There are little crepe bows tied to the frames of the photographs of my grandfather, my grandmother, my uncle, and my mother. There are also little shrines of forget-me-nots. Like all the people who have reached the age where nobody asks them questions about themselves, my aunt confesses very often. She possesses a griffon called Alcibiades, and a parrot call Xanthippe. Her lover visits her every other day. They sit in two armchairs, and neither hears a word of what the other is saying. Her three maids are all called Justine, to simplify."

"What a charming old lady."

Poor Mademoiselle, with her eagle's eye, her perfect hearing, her resolute agnosticism!

Poor Comte X., who understood everything!

At the end Achille would always add: "Believe me, it's not gay, the country. A self-respecting goose should lay its golden egg in a quiet, decent way, without asking to be nursed and pampered and admired."

"Don't grumble," his friend Philippe would protest. "I have no functioning geese in my life; besides, tobogganing is a delightful form of sport."

. . . . . .

Every week Mademoiselle wrote to Achille. These letters were the great joy of her existence. She filled them to overflowing with the life she had never led, with those experiences of her heart and mind which had been all the more vivid and complete from not having been translated into the

halting unlit language of fact. As we grow older, does not each year undo some knot of certainty with which we had tied our thoughts? The positive architecture of youth crumbles away, leaving, perhaps, a pillar or an arch, some transparent ruin through which we can see the sky and watch the setting sun, and feel a lazy April breeze languidly spreading a message of primroses and violets.

The immediate has lost its importance. It is no longer necessary for one thing to lead to another in a tyrannous chain of cause and effect. A certain peace of perspective has settled on life. Hope has been left behind, and, perhaps, doubt as well. Everything can be enjoyed separately and serenely, with no false stimulant of illusion. There is nowhere for anything to lead to. Is not our every act as relevant and as irrelevant as the song of a skylark? It is good to be old and wise—to look at the world with irony and with indulgence, to know that the fever has gone out of life and the frenzy out of living.

What if twinges of regret still tug at your memory, telling you of trembling lips and shining eyes, and a fluttering heart that was like a pain in your side? They die away. The fields are spread with flowers and the sky with stars. Where there was a daffodil yesterday, to-morrow there will be a rose. Love and hate, ambition and revenge, despair and ecstasy—what are they like? Were they ever real? Surely they must have always been a gaudy masquerade, a meaningless, irrelevant procession in fancy dress, noisy and absurd.

"I don't think," wrote Mademoiselle to Achille, "that I have ever overdressed my feelings."

And she never had. Her taste and her arrogance alike

prevented it. She had made her own life. Perhaps, if she had to live it over again, there were little things here and there which she would alter, but no, on the whole, she would not change much. It was sad not to have had children, but then she had Achille.

No doubt many would say it was a pity not to have married; but what an absurd thing a husband would have been in her life—a stranger, chosen by her parents, whom she would learn to know with all the dreadful inevitable familiarity of everyday life; whose every trick would get on her nerves; a man who lived in the same house with her, who could never surprise her, of every detail of whose character she was devastatingly aware, who shared—or rather obtruded into—her life with all of the paraphernalia of intimacy, except the only possible form of intimacy—an intimacy of choice, of discovery, of delight. No, Mademoiselle was most emphatically not sorry that she hadn't married.

"But you might have married for love," Marie Louise had said.

"Alas! in my day only servants married for love," Mademoiselle had retorted, and into her voice, according to her niece, a certain note of wistfulness had crept.

In her letters to Achille she would describe her youth, her father, her mother, her adored sister Lili. With her superb narrative gift and her relentless undercurrent of irony, Mademoiselle's descriptions would etch themselves on the minds of anyone who heard her talk. Her weekly letters were really a masterly Homeric legend of provincial life, outlined in acid and yet lit and coloured by her profound yet restrained depth of feeling. Mademoiselle was an artist, and as an artist the very limitations of her story gave to it

the line of a bronze, added to it the force of a narrow but deep and rushing stream. And her gifts played up to one another. Caustic and tender, imaginative and disillusioned, the masterpiece with which we are all familiar was dragged out of her by her love for Achille.

"It is wonderful what a passion for writing letters women have," he would say. "They are possessed of an insatiable craving to compromise themselves in black and white. My Tante Amélie is not only overcome each year by the recurring phenomenon of the first snowdrop, she also seems compelled to share the startling news with me. And if some rich industrial from Bordeaux has had an anæmic and dotless nonentity from 'our' world foisted on to him, I am expected to show the same interest as if I owed him money and her marriage."

"Tante Amélie's letters are not a bit like that," Marie Louise would say. "Besides, I long to hear about the grand industrial, and how it all came about, and—"

"My poor cousin, Marie Louise, believes that all human nature is dramatic. Fortunately, she has no talent, or it would be extremely boring and so unnecessary."

"Marie Louise has got a heart of gold," Philippe would counter.

"Precisely; a heart of gold, heavy, massive, worn on a chain or a bangle; a locket, in fact—Marie Louise is a locket of gold."

It was in 1904 that the tragedy happened. Achille was so essentially not mortal—he was not human enough. If someone had said that he would live for ever, no one would have been surprised. He was an institution, a part of the scheme of things, as elegant and decorative as a bit of carving,

exquisitely immaterial and permanent. "*Comme nature morte, Achille est ce que je préfère,*" one of his friends had said; to which his companion had retorted: "*On voit que vous n'aimez pas les natures mortes.*"

It was then that the incredible happened. Achille caught pneumonia and died.

"After all, it is a loss," somebody said; and somebody else added: "I feel as if the Papacy had received a blow."

Mlle. de la Peronniere was inconsolable. Sitting very erect in her chair, she would look out of the window with tearless, sightless eyes. Rational though she had been all her life, facing every sorrow with fortitude and without prayer, suddenly, for the first time, she felt her heart crying out for a miracle; she knew that her very soul was beseeching God in an agony of supplication. Sometimes she would say to herself in a low, set voice: "Achille is dead"; but it meant nothing to her. How could she stretch these words—words chosen by her own tongue—to mean anything; how could they reach the tragedy, the mystery of death?

Alone she would sit there remembering, forcing tiny details into her already overcrowded mind, determined to keep them bright and fresh, to take them out each day so that not one should be lost.

Then one morning a big box arrived—a huge cardboard box. On it in Achille's writing were the words: "Letters from Aunt Amélie." Trembling, with tears in her eyes, she undid the string. Here in her hands, were twenty years of love, twenty years of tenderness. It seemed to her that she was about to open her whole life. After all,

hadn't she given everything to Achille: wasn't it he who had kept her, even at the end of her life, still hoping and fearing and dreaming? Slowly she lifted the lid. There they were, packets of them—once a week for twenty years! Yes, there must be at least a thousand. She took one out. It had not been opened. She tried another; the seal was unbroken. With her heart pounding, with feverish fingers, she scattered them around her. Not one of her letters had he ever read!

For one moment she felt faint. Then she got up and went into the passage. "Jules," she called, "I do not wish to be disturbed." Alcibiades had been rolling in the dust. With a curious concentration she stroked him, first with one hand and then with the other, after which she returned to her boudoir and locked the door. One by one she broke open the envelopes. She took out the letters; she crumpled them a little in her dusty hands; then she put them back again, covered with finger-marks.

She never looked at one of them. She didn't read a line. But each of them passed through her hands, emerging used and fingered. Perhaps the oldest didn't matter so much; the paper was thin, the ink was brown; but each one was brought out and put back—little bits of paper physically tired from having been much fingered, physically alive from having been so often read.

When she had finished she went into the drawing-room. The Comte de X. was waiting for her.

"I am sorry to have kept you," she said. "They have sent me all the letters I wrote to Achille."

"They were the only real love-letters he ever received. Won't you let me read some of them some day?"

"*Cher ami,*" she protested, "since when have you taken to reading other people's love-letters?"

"Since I ceased receiving them myself, I suppose. Amélie —please—don't you think you might write me a letter?"

There was a catch in her voice. She choked a little.

"My letters were for him—they all belong to him."

"Even now? Now that he is dead?"

"Even more now that he is dead."

"Amélie, perhaps I have been wrong. Perhaps, in spite of everything, you have been right about Achille. After all, he kept your letters—every one of them inviolate."

"Yes," she said; "He never read them out loud. He never used them. They belonged to him as my heart belonged to him. Yes, dear friend, I am right. One must be right, mustn't one, each time that one really cares?"

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Extract from Biographical Dictionary, Larousse, 1904.

D'Ossoville, Comte Achille de.—Born 1866. Died 1904. S. of the Comte Aristide d'Ossoville and the Countess née de la Peronniere. He wrote several volumes of short sketches and light verse, which are no longer read. But his name will always be immortal as the nephew to whom Mlle. de la Peronniere wrote her world-famous letters. Bibliography: *Bouquet d'Immortelles, Codes et Codas, Culs de Sacs et Culs de Lampes, Profils Retrouvés, The Hero of the Peronniere Letters,* by Alice Hines; *Achilles d'Ossoville,* a short sketch of the man who received a thousand masterpieces, by Marmaduke Deems; *The Real Achille,* by Professor Parkes; *Cherchons le Neveu,* par Jean Berenice; *Fräulein von la Peronniere und ihr Neffe Graf d'Ossoville,* ausführliche Geschichte zweier Zeitgeiste, von Professor Rudolf Hanzheim. See also Peronniere, Amélie de la, T. II, p. 204.

RESPONSIBILITY [1]

by THOMAS BOYD

DURING the day the Marne was green, but at twilight the soft haze of falling evening obscured its face with a film of blue, like smoke from an autumn bonfire. Lighter, though soaked in the same shade, the houses of Nanteuil were quiet in the July dusk; the windows were darkened, and the chimneys unused. On those two streets which terminated at the river—one ending at the foot of the low iron bridge—or on those three thoroughfares which ran parallel with the Marne, nobody was walking. It was as if the town had become suddenly depopulated in some horrible way and now was tightly hugging its ghost.

But inside the houses, had you been enabled to peep through the carefully boarded windows or to halt on the threshold of the stone doorway, you would have seen in the dwelling which stood on the corner nearest the bridge a number of soldiers whose shadows, in the candlelight, were enormous on the bare, white walls of an unfurnished second-story room. That they were formed into two separate groups was noticeable; perhaps five of the men were drawn closely together by the door, seated uncomfortable on the heavy marching-order packs which they had not yet unrolled.

[1] From *Points of Honor;* copyright, 1925, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the author and the publishers.

With eyes which gazed hesitantly about, sometimes lowering deliberately, and always wandering (except for the one man who looked blankly ahead), they could not have appeared less at their ease. They were members of the fourth replacement battalion which, after travelling by rail, camion, and foot from Brest, had reached Nanteuil that day. The other occupants of the room seemed very much at home. Andrus, the oldest, was stretched out on the floor, with blankets spread for the night, his blouse folded into the shape of a pillow, his shirt open at the neck, and his sleeves rolled above the elbows. About him khaki haversacks were placed by the makeshift pillows, and on each muddy, greasy carrier rested an aluminum mess-kit, the upturned canteen cup holding a fork or spoon. These belonged to the men who had endured a month of Belleau Wood, where attack and counter-attack were engaged in under a continuous bombardment, a bombardment that might grow light or heavy but never entirely cease. They had seen, in the course of the month's siege, the trees stripped naked, the limbs grotesquely like the shattered arms and legs of men, and the grass browned by poisonous fumes. That morning they had come back to Nanteuil, several kilometers from Belleau Wood, to lie in support of the division which had relieved them. They had been told that they had saved Paris—a city known to them only by report—and they believed themselves to be on their way to a rest camp.

Andrus, with the sweat stains on his face, watched John Wainwright lounging against the wall, dribbling yellow flecks of tobacco into the trough of white paper which he held in his hand. Wainwright wet the end of the cigarette, causti-

cally inquiring before his lolling tongue had reached the edge of the paper:

"How long you boys been over from the States?"

There was shifting of feet while restive eyes besought one another to make the shameful confession—shameful because through some peculiar reasoning of the older men a recent arrival in France was a person to be scorned.

" 'Bout two weeks, I guess. We'd of been here sooner if they hadn't stopped us back in that camp at Chatillon." The voice of the new man whined dully, apologetically. Andrus looked at him, thinking: "Lord, what an awful specimen!" He was; one eye fixed sternly on the ceiling, the other stared straight before him, and his hands, palms upturned, were like gloves stuffed with cotton. Among those five tyros he was the least prepossessing, yet certainly the most striking; to be sure he would not have been assigned to pose for one of those preposterous recruiting posters which shows a young man with a Grecian nose and a bronze throat relentlessly charging the enemy. He was a sorrowful sight, and he made Andrus feel that, in letting him in, the service had abandoned all physical standards in its eagerness for recruits.

But Wainwright was talking. "Well, sir," he said significantly, "you'd of better stayed where you God damn was. Boy, it's hell up there." Sadly he shook his large, unkempt head. "Nawsir, I hate to think of what them Squareheads done to pore old Heck after they captured him. Boy, you wanna look out; don't be hankerin' to git up to the front. Them Dutchmen's mean; if they ketch ya they cut ya where ya don't wanna be cut an' you

come home whinnyin' like a colt. Ain't that so, Rainey?"

"Yes, sir," said Rainey emphatically. "If you see they've gotcha on the hop there's on'y one thing to do: put the old Springfield to your nose an' let 'er flicker. You gotta be careful of their damn liquid fire, too"—Rainey wanted to play the painter on his own account—"they sneak up on ya in the night an' spray it over your back. It burns right into your bones. W'y, I couldn't count the guys I seen up there that's bones was burnt right to a cinder!"

"But them G.I. cans are the worst," said Wainwright, leaning forward and lighting his cigarette from the candle. "You wanna step high an' wide when they're makin' a call. W'y, I've seen 'em make holes in the ground so big that you could hide a house in."

Andrus saw the new men unconsciously bunching together, as if their solidarity might defend them from these awful fates. Their movements were jerky, awkward, and he knew they were afraid to speak. He grew angry with Wainwright. What did the damned fool get out of scaring these new men? He wasn't very much of a wildcat himself, but to hear him talk. . . ! Not, of course, that Belleau Wood wasn't bad enough. That was just it: the front was so bad it couldn't stand any embroidering. He said: "Come out of your hop, Wainwright. There's no use in your lyin' when the real dope's bad enough."

Wainwright grinned widely, then puffed out his cheeks as if he were about to say "Blah." His voice blustered—it was habitual with him—"All right, grampappy. I won't scare none of the boys."

Andrus scowled, not at Wainwright (for he was good-natured enough) but at the position of defender in which

his remark had thrust him. Already the manageable eye of the sadly pottered youth gleamed a thousand heartfelt thanks to Andrus. And Andrus, who had spoken only because he was irritated, did not want them—least of all from their present source. And now the new man got to his feet and crossed the room toward Andrus. Half way there he worked his oddly shaped hand into the pocket of his blouse and brought out a package of cigarettes. Beside Andrus he stopped, held out the package, and sat down. And in his dully whining voice, like the sound caught and held by a music teacher's tuning-fork, he said: "Have a cigarette—I guess they're pretty scarce up around the front, aren't they?"

Andrus wanted to smoke badly. He had long since used all of his own tobacco—used it, not given it away—and the nearness of this Turkish leaf had a fascination for his fancy. He could almost taste the inhalation, coating the roof of his mouth, his palate, then drifting sensuously outward through his nostrils. Yet he drily answered: "Better keep 'em for yourself; you may need 'em."

The youth was not troubled by the rejection of his offer. At once he replaced them in his pocket. "My name's Hannan." He waited, smiling with timorous friendliness. Andrus felt the impulse to say "What of it?" Instead, he answered in his rather grating voice: "Mine's Andrus."

Discussion would have ended there had not Hannan pursued with surprising fervor: "I'm certainly glad to know you, Mr. Andrus." He sat cross-legged on the floor, his elbows hooked over his knees, the hands limp and the fingers spreading widely apart. "What section of the States are you from?" he asked.

Andrus had lived in many places in America: he had been a country school-teacher in Pennsylvania, had worked in the factories of Pittsburgh, and drifted, as a mechanic, through Youngstown and Cleveland to Detroit. To have explained all this would have been a bother without recompense of any kind. For a while he was silent; then he said shortly: "I'm from Detroit."

"Detroit! Is that so?" Hannan was pleased, excited. "Why, I was born forty miles from there myself. What do you think of that!"

Andrus thought very little of it. The vicinity of Detroit held no particular remembrances for him. Hannan could have gained his serious attention only by affirming that he had been spat from the mouth of the Devil. Even that would not have greatly surprised him. Andrus frowned, or, rather, the creases in his forehead deepened and the furrow on each cheek grew straight and long. His expression brought silence from Hannan.

Both were quiet, listening to Wainwright's endless, boastful speech and the banter it provoked from the older men. The others sat about uncomfortably. They warily digested and selected bits of conversation as the candle, set on top of Wainwright's steel helmet, sputtered so low that the wax ran down to the floor in tiny streams. Andrus yawned and commenced to unroll his wrapped puttees.

"Got anybody to bunk with?" asked Hannan.

"No," said Andrus, continuing to loosen the leather thongs of his shoes. His answer was not spoken hospitably.

Hannan did not seem to need encouragement. "Then I'll bring my blankets over. They'll make the floor a lot softer to sleep on."

Andrus knew that bedfellows, under those circumstances, were seldom chosen to the satisfaction of each. He knew that three blankets were better than one. Because of which he was silent, watching Hannan cross the room, pick up the heavy marching-order pack and drag it back across the bare floor. He removed his hobnailed shoes, put his rolled puttees in them, and after loosening the laces of his breeches he was ready for bed. He lay down, settled his head on his folded jacket and stretched out. He was asleep by the time Hannan lay down beside him.

Bugles were not blown in Nanteuil—it was too near the front—but from the hall outside came the tramp of rough-shod feet as a sergeant walked from door to door, bawling: "Rise and shine, you birds, rise and shine." It was quite dark in the room, not even the faintest sign of daylight showing through the boarded window, and Andrus propped himself on an elbow and rubbed his eyes, wondering how morning could have come so soon, or if perhaps, the Germans had broken through the lines again. The rest of the men were still asleep, or in that lethargic borderland between slumber and wakefulness. Andrus sat up and reached for his shoes, wondering whether he should rouse the men. It was none of his business if they didn't get up before noon, yet if they were late the whole squad would get the devil from the platoon commander. There was nothing to be gained by that. He drew on his shoes and commenced to wrap his puttees when sounds in the adjoining room decided him. "Hey, you fellahs! Better get up," he said.

For most of the men the act of dressing was easily accomplished, because they rarely removed their shirts and

breeches. But Hannan needed more time. While Andrus adjusted his gas mask and Wainwright, with his spoon, scraped the candle grease from his helmet, Hannan searched for his shirt and breeches, which he had taken off the night before. He found them and stood up, in once white underclothes which sagged and bagged depressingly.

Andrus was severely silent, but Wainwright exclaimed: "For goodness sake, lady, you don't think you're on Broadway, do ya?" A few of the men tittered and Hannan, staring hard with his curiously set eyes, continued to dress. Andrus stepped into the hall and walked down the stone steps.

Fastening their clothes, some with their shoes unlaced, men were trotting from their billets to fall in line on the designated company street as Andrus passed through the outer doorway. He was seldom first and never last. To-day he struck the medium again. For less than half of the men had arrived. They were formed in two skeleton ranks, facing the Marne, a clouded emerald color, flowing primly between even banks.

Unhurriedly Andrus walked behind the fourth platoon and the third. Halfway past the second he stopped and efficiently crowded into the front rank. By the free and practised use of his elbows he made a space between number three of his squad and number one of the squad on the left, sufficient for him to see the right guide. This was the first formation for more than a month past. The sergeant in charge, before the platoon, struggled between leniency and military duty; it was time to order his command to attention and call the roll, though if he did many would have to be reported late or absent. Andrus, being present, wanted

the roll called at once and the morning exercises begun. He grew morose, viewing the hesitating sergeant, and thought: " 'y gosh, here it is the first damn formation and half the company's late." Just as ever, from now on the same performance would be repeated each day. He was so accustomed to it he could close his eyes and form a correct mental picture of all that was going on: men in the front rank were surreptitiously buttoning their blouses; men in the rear rank leaned over, fastening their puttees; men in neither rank trotted hurriedly over the ground which remained between themselves and the company. And the sergeant fidgeted about what to do.

"P'toon, Chun!" shouted the sergeant, smartly dashing a slip of paper against his thigh. "Har-right dr-ss." Quickly, he placed himself beside the right guide, surveying the front rank. "Ste-eady-y—hup there, Johnson wait for the command: Stead-dy-y-y, Fr'nt." The eyes of the men, which had been directed toward the sergeant, now turned slowly to the front, and the left arms, palms on hips, dropped weakly to their owners' sides. "Tenchun to roll-call!" commanded the sergeant, referring to his slip of paper.

"Sergeants McDermott."

"He-rrr."

"Oliver."

"Hup."

"Corporals Cook."

"Urp."

"Dunbar."

"Heurr."

"Hicks."

"Up-p."

"Kahl."

"Eeow."

"Lawes."

"Heah, suh."

"Privates Andrus."

"Hurr."

"Angell."

"Hyah."

"Archer."

"Hip."

"Boudreau."

No answer. "Late," mumbled the sergeant.

"Bullis."

"Harp."

"Carver."

"Hyar."

"Eggert." (A new man.)

"Here I am."

"Freiburg."

"Yup."

"Hannan."

No answer.

"Hannan!"

Footsteps pounded down the road toward the fourth squad.

"Hannan—Hartman."

"He-e-rr. Har."

The sergeant glanced up from his slip of paper. "Say," he said angrily, "how many Hartmans are there in this platoon?"

"Only one that I know of," said Hartman.

"Then who else was it that answered when I called Hartman's name?" He was very put out.

"I d-d-did." A breathless voice sounded from the rear rank in back of Andrus. The sergeant elongated his neck. "Well, what in hell's your name?"

"H—private H-hannan."

"Why didn't you answer when I called it?"

"I did."

"Don't talk back. Report to Lieutenant Jones after chow. Rear rank, 'Bout face; Front rank, rear rank four paces forward, har-rch. Hands on hips, place." The morning exercises were begun and the men bent in one direction for the good of their livers, another for their kidneys, and still another as a preventive of flat feet.

After they had reassembled and been dismissed Andrus found Hannan following closely after him. He had an impulse to turn and say: "Beat it!"

For once, breakfast was plentiful. There was even guava jelly among the stores which had piled up at regimental headquarters while the battalions had been at the front fighting, with the bombardment so heavy behind them that supplies could not be got through. Andrus, with his dripping mess-kit in his hands, walked from the smoking field kitchen to his billet for a few moments' rest before drill. But he had no sooner got inside and sat down on his blankets than he remembered the order of the day was combat packs and rifles; his pack was strung out all over the floor, his blankets were not folded and his rifle not cleaned, and he was too sensible to be found at inspection with a dirty rifle or an ill-made pack. He stood up to fold his blanket, thinking: "Damn that Hannan." For Hannan's blankets were in

a mass on the floor, the carrier of his pack, his bayonet, canteen, and towel were tangled in them, causing Andrus to reflect irritably that Hannan of all people was the worst to bunk with. He finished folding his blanket, dried his mess dish on a soiled towel, and picked up his rifle. He was drawing a bit of oiled flannel through the bore as the rest of the men came in.

Just, by golly, as he expected. Wainwright loudly wanted to borrow some oil, and oil was precious. "Why don't you fellahs take care of your oil?" Andrus answered grumpily. "You got as much chance to get it as I have." He went on cleaning his rifle, then put the oil back in the butt plate and commenced to make his pack for drill.

Drill formation was much more military than that for morning exercises. But Andrus was never seriously troubled by that. He had come into the army, he vaguely knew, to do his duty, and his sole object during the war was to take care of himself, not to expose himself to unnecessary danger, not to get in the bad graces of his officers and thus bring extra duty upon himself. It was for this reason that he continued to remain a private: he did not want responsibility. To direct himself was sufficient. For him it was a part of the day to clean his equipment so that the most sharp-eyed of inspecting officers could never say: "Take his name, sergeant."

At a little before nine o'clock the company, standing before the Marne, was called to attention. "Squads Left!" called the company commander, and in a column of fours they swung down the street, past the low iron bridge and out toward a cleared but unplanted field.

It was a hot day. The sky was a sheet of metallic blue through which the sun seemed to have burned a sizzling hole. The blades of grass were singed a little, and about the armpits and on the backs of the soldiers sweat showed through the olive drab shirts. But the company, divided up into platoons, continued to execute Left Front into Line, Squads Right and Left, to Oblique, and Andrus was unpleasantly reminded of the quantity of food he had eaten for breakfast. At first he thought it was the guava jelly, but as he grew aware of a small, hard lump in the pit of his stomach he included in his condemnation the whole breakfast fare: the sergeant major coffee, the stewed prunes, and fried mush. Damn! but it was a hot day.

"On Right into Line!" called the platoon commander. Ahead, Number One of the first squad pivoted sharply, marked time until the count of four, and then stepped off at a correct angle. Andrus was dizzy when the men halted on a platoon front. And during the manual of arms he handled his rifle clumsily. Once he thought he would ask if he could drop out and return to his billet, but that, with him, would have been unprecedented. He remained with the platoon until it was joined up with the company and marched back to Nanteuil.

More slowly than usual he walked up the steps of the billet, and while the rest of the men were rattling their messkits in preparation for the noonday meal, Andrus sat down on his folded blanket. He didn't want any chow. No, sir, this rich food didn't agree with him now. Perhaps he had got too accustomed to cold boiled potatoes and monkey meat. "Lord!" he groaned, and lay down in the now empty

room. Hannan came in, late as usual, and as he drew his mess-kit from his haversack he sympathetically prompted: "You'll be late for chow."

"What of it?" said Andrus shortly. Chow be damned and Hannan be damned! Dismally he lay face downward on the soft woollen blankets, which would not assuage his illness. The minutes dragged—he thought of the food which would be served at luncheon, and he commenced to fret because the men had not returned. It must be, he thought, time for afternoon drill! As he lay there, Hannan appeared in the doorway, holding a warm steak in his mess-kit. "I thought you might be hungry, Mr. Andrus," he said, standing above the prostrate figure. Andrus lifted his head from the dark, woolly blanket. "Don't want any chow," he said. Hannan stared perplexedly at the mess-kit.

They left Nanteuil one evening, riding in camions along the Marne and guessing whether they were going toward or from the front. Sometimes the sound of artillery would be quite close, a chain of rumbling which stretched parallel to the direction in which the camions were moving. At other times the reverberations were faint. The men would smile their pleasure at the thought of travelling to a rest area until the sharp detonations were heard again.

It was dark when the camions stopped at a cross-road. Grumbling, the men clambered to the ground and were herded into a column of twos. For several hours they marched over a bare, shell-torn road. Everywhere was an unearthly quiet, broken when the word was passed to stand fast in case an illuminating rocket was fired. Suddenly the men stepped into a communication trench. The duckboards

were slippery and the trench narrow; the men did not walk, they floundered, and, floundering in the wet with their forty-pound packs to make their balance more difficult, they cursed bitterly but with restraint. Somewhere ahead a signal pistol popped, and in a moment a bright light, like a mammoth glowing moth, fluttered slowly to the ground. The line halted, the men crowding against one another. Then they stumbled on, turning to the left side into the main trench, where they stopped again. The billeting officer was assigning the men to their dugouts.

On the second evening of their occupancy of the sector Andrus was standing at his post at the extreme left of the trench, where a machine-gun squad had their emplacement. His duty was not only to guard the machine-gunners against a surprise from the rear but also to challenge all persons who entered or left the trench, since the only passage was at that spot. He had been on watch for about an hour when he heard a group of men laboriously making their way over the slippery duckboards.

"Halt! Who's there?" He raised his bayoneted rifle.

"Wiring party."

"Advance, wiring party, and give the countersign."

The wiring party, headed by a sergeant, passed by, struggling with several coils of barbed wire. Andrus recognized Hannan's ill-balanced shoulders among the men. The men filed out of the trench, walking through the black night of No Man's Land. Andrus turned to the camouflaged shelter of the machine-gun emplacement, where the crew leaned against the parapet of the trench.

Ten o'clock came, and the corporal of the guard brought the second relief for Andrus's post. Andrus mumbled the

instructions of his post to the man who was to take his place, and made his way along the tortuous trench to his dugout. The dugout was perhaps fifteen feet in the ground. It had a boarded ceiling, and a boarded floor on which the water was several inches deep. He took off his blouse and his wet shoes, placed the shoes by his head and drew his blankets over him. Very tired from his watch, he was nearly asleep when he was disturbed by the sound of men stumbling down the dugout steps and splashing through the water on the floor. It was the wiring party, and one of the men was talking:

"I don't know where the hell he went. When that machine-gun opened up he was right beside me. I gotta hunch he tried to crawl into that shell hole."

"'y Gosh," said Andrus, "can't you let a fellah sleep?"

"Oh, I guess we gotta right to talk," said one of the men. The voice gathered indignation as it continued: "I guess you'd talk, too, if you had just been out on a wiring party and had the Squareheads open up and knock off one of your men."

"He wasn't knocked off, I'd swear to that," objected the first voice.

"Who?" asked Andrus.

"Why, Hannan; who do you think we been talkin' about?"

"What's the matter with Hannan?" asked Andrus.

"Ain't we jist been tellin' you?" The voice was shrill with exasperation. "He got hit out there in front of our new barbed wire."

Andrus was silent. It was, he thought, just like the numbskull to go out on a harmless wiring party and get hit. If there was only one bullet in the whole German army

and ten million men to get it, Hannan would be elected to the honor. The damn fool. He stretched out and drew the blanket over his shoulder. He supposed they were wondering why he didn't offer to go out after him. Let them! There was no reason why he should go out after him, no reason why he should even bother to think about it. Hannan meant nothing to him. Certainly he had not sought him out. He turned over and closed his eyes. But they popped wide open and he found himself on his back, staring up through the blackness. . . . They couldn't find him! Well, why in hell couldn't they find him?

Must be a pretty rotten bunch. Besides, why did they have to tell *him* about it? He wasn't the official life-saver of the battalion. A rotten outfit, not much better any more than a draft division. What the hell—he drew his blanket close against his chin and deliberately set his thoughts upon something that was delectable to him: a comfortable chair, a mug of beer, and a cribbage board and some one to play who minded his business. . . . But the blanket scratched and in place of the comfortable chair he pictured the body of Hannan lying out on the field, perhaps in that shell hole in front of the bombing post. There was the chance of its being a bad wound, one that would cause Hannan to bleed to death; in two days the sun would have bloated and blackened his body. Damn that Wainwright, why hadn't he done something? . . . Oh, hell, there was no use trying to sleep. He sat up, reached for his wet shoes and pulled them on over his thick woollen socks. Picking up his helmet and gas mask, he slipped down off his bunk, his heels striking the berth below, to the water-covered floor. He felt his way to the door and climbed up the mud-covered steps.

A pale quarter-moon, dim through the dissolving fog overhead, faintly brought out the humps in the winding trench where the bulk of the company kept watch in the firing bays, on the parapets, in the shell holes between the trench and the barbed wire. Andrus stepped cautiously over the duckboards, apprehending the sentry's vibrant challenge, the pointed rifle thrust menacingly at his chin. To walk through the trench at night always made him nervous. There was, he thought, no telling when one of these idiots would pull the trigger on you before you got a chance to give the countersign. But he walked along encountering no such ill-luck. Even the erratic Bullis was sufficiently composed to let him pass without jabbing a bayonet into his neck, and when he got to the end of the trench the guard at the machine-gun emplacement passed him as a matter of course. He crawled into the shelter, where the gunner peered over a bank of dirt into the night. On his hands and knees beside the gunner he whispered: "S-s-st." " 'Smatter?" asked the gunner, without looking up. "Where were they mending that barbed wire?" "Right out in front, in the first fence where that shell hit yesterday afternoon." "Well, don't shoot if you hear any noises; I'm goin' out." "Better be pretty damn careful," advised the gunner; "the Squareheads are keepin' a sharp watch."

Andrus crept out of the shelter and passed through the opening of the trench. He had still another place to go to. There was a bombing pit which guarded the left flank of his trench and the right flank of the trench adjoining. It was just inside the first line of barbed wire, and as he approached it he debated whether to crawl or to walk. To crawl would take too much time; now if the damn fools

only didn't think he was a spy! "Hey you guys!" "Who's that?" commanded a tense scared voice. "It's Andrus." He walked ahead, guided by their voices, and saw them crouched in a hole. "Better watch out; the Squareheads are on the job to-night," they said. Why didn't they tell him something he didn't know! "I'm goin' out in front. Jist sit tight till I git back." "What're you goin' for?" they asked, but he was already moving away toward the opening in the barbed wire.

He walked quickly over the spongy earth, his eyes staring into the darkness. To see the wire was almost impossible, and to find the opening . . . Suddenly his hand struck wire. He drew back, startled, then felt his way along the scratching prongs until he reached the opening. He had sufficient control of his mind to reflect upon the difference the few steps had made in his feeling of security. On his own side of the barbed wire he had been safe, but now he was in No Man's Land, afraid even of the night.

His face was twitching and his hand unsteady as he groped along to the next fence. On which side was the shell hole that the wiring party had spoken of? He remembered seeing it in the daytime, now he could not remember its position. He was frightened, but to convince himself that he was not he deliberately assumed the shell hole to be on the outer side. Forward he went, tearing his body through the grasping prongs which lacerated his skin and caught at his clothing. Breathless, he worked through, and as he turned he heard a clicking noise from the German trench. He dropped to the ground as an illuminating rocket rose in the night and slowly descended, making a wide, mellow arc of light.

For a few moments he lay motionless, his eyes roving the ground in search of Hannan. Like dice rattled in a metal box, a Maxim fired, the bullets singing through the barbed wire. Then silence. Well, he couldn't stay out all night. Crouching, his hands held before him, fingers outstretched, he felt along the ground in front of the wire. Once he ventured to whisper: "Hannan." He heard a groan, so near his body jerked upward in fright. Not daring to speak, he crawled, passing his hands over the earth, feeling the bits of rotting equipment, duds, and humanity which had lain there for months.

"Here I am," he heard a plaintive whisper, and held out his hand. Hannan was sitting. "Hit bad?" "I can walk if you help me." They stood up. With his arm about Hannan's waist and Hannan's arm about his shoulder, he plodded toward the opening in the wire. In the middle of the entanglement Hannan whimpered: "I can't make it. You go back an' let me stay here, Andrus." Grimly Andrus lifted him on his shoulders and staggered forward. His fear was gone, replaced by a white fury that made him grit his teeth and gave him strength to support his burden. He passed through the wire, the bare space which lay between it and the next, and lurched through the last gap, his puttees in shreds, his legs bleeding.

" 'At you, Andrus?" asked one of the men in the bombing pit. "No, it's the Kaiser," he said sourly. At the entrance to the trench he answered the challenge. "This the guy that got hit?" asked the sentry. Andrus stopped. Together they laid Hannan down by the machine-gun shelter. "Got it in the leg. Probably smashed. Somebody'll have to get a couple of stretcher bearers," Andrus said.

Well, that was over. Now he could go back to his bunk and try to get some sleep. It was only a few hours before dawn, when the whole company would have to stand to in the firing bays in case of a morning attack. Damn it! He stumbled down the duckboards toward his dugout.

"OUR TRUSTY AND WELL-BELOVED" [1]

by Sir Hugh Clifford

"To me the straighter prison,
To me the heavier chain,
To be Diego Valdez,
High Admiral of Spain!"
The Song of Diego Valdez.

Sir Philip Hanbury-Erskine, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,—whose other titles in the liberal type of the Royal Commission, which that day had been read before the Legislative Council, had filled up many lines of print, "Our trusty and well-beloved Philip Hanbury-Erskine," as the Commission had it—was pursued by the twin devils of restlessness and insomnia. Old memories—memories that mocked his proud eminence—tore at the heart of him; and after sundry vain attempts to read, first a turgid official report and subsequently a frivolous French novel, he slipped from under his mosquito-net, and paddled barefoot on to the wide verandah that flanked his bedroom.

Leaning over the balustrade, he looked forth upon the sleeping capital of his kingdom. The throne which he had that day ascended had been for many years the Mecca of his pilgrimage, the goal of his ambitions, the dream of a man to whom hard toil of a practical kind had left scant

1 From *Malayan Monochromes*, by permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

space for dreaming. From the verandah upon which he stood, aided by the eminence upon which Government House was set, he looked in bird's-eye fashion over the town that lay sleeping about his feet. The ethereal moonlight of south-eastern Asia spread its glamour all about, blurring and softening details, but revealing essentials as clearly as the light of day could do. Against the distant skyline the wooded cones of a little archipelago seemed to float like giant lotuses upon the surface of the glittering sea; nearer inshore the lights of moored shipping were points of garish, crudely-red fire against the black bulks of the hulls; immediately before them big stone buildings, huddled closely together as though for standing-room, marked the offices and go-downs, the stores and shops of the business quarter of the town.

Sir Philip's eye passed casually over all these things—though each one of them held for him memories of a half-forgotten youth—and drawing farther inland, dwelt upon the packed yet straggling native quarter, which, beginning where the solid edifices devoted to toil and trade had their ending, covered closely some ten square miles of alluvial flat, and broke up, just as a wave sprays against a rock, around the foot of the hill upon which Government House had its stand. Far away to the right, the bungalows of the European population gave a hint of their presence by glimpses of tiled roofs embowered in clustering vegetation.

Although the town was sleeping, from the restless native quarter there came a low, monotonous buzz and hum, that was as familiar music in Sir Philip's ears. The pulsing of native drums, faint as a heart-beat, but instinct with wild, half-savage unrest, came to him fitfully, like a voice crying from the past, and set his nerves tingling. The subtle scent

of an eastern bazaar—which is compact of spice, and garlic and fruit, and of warm, voluptuous humanity—was borne to him, faint and enervating, upon sauntering breezes of the night, awakening old thoughts, old memories, old desires, with a vividness that is possible only when an appeal is made to us through our sense of smell. Sight and sound and scent—each of them so strangely, so startlingly familiar; each one of them an experience that belonged to a dim and distant past—whipped Sir Philip with a sudden craving for freedom and for youth; pricked him with an unfettered recklessness; rowelled him with a passionate hatred for the ordered present with its conventions, its formalities, its duties, its burdens, its petty responsibilities; and held forth to him as a lure "one crowded hour of glorious life" down there in the seething ant-heap of native life—one more hour, only one, such as had been his of old.

He was a thick-set but active man, somewhat below middle size, with coarse black hair and dark piercing eyes. He bore his fifty years more lightly than many men his juniors by a decade bore the burden of their age; and to-night memory and association had awakened in him the recklessness, the impetuosity, and something of the divine, audacious folly of youth. He was quivering like a terrior as he stood there gazing out into the night, inhaling with fierce eagerness the scents that were borne to him from the bazaar; and his grasp upon the verandah-rail tightened till the iron seemed to eat into his palms. It was to him as though he were holding on with might and main to the conventional, respectable, iron-bound realities that hem in the life of a high Colonial official; yet he held on to them, mechanically, instinctively, reluctantly—for of a sudden

these things were revealed to him as harassing trivialities that were of nothing worth.

He had left this land on promotion three-and-twenty years before; and in leaving it, it had always seemed to him, he had left behind him also his youth. Since then, in uncounted quarters of the Empire, he had served in this post or the other, garnering unsought honours by the way, dealing with problems of various degrees of interest, complexity, difficulty, or dulness; and climbing ever higher, higher in the Colonial hierarchy, until now, in the fulness of time, his dearest, his only steady, ambition had been gratified, and he had returned at last to the land in which his first years of toil had been spent, to rule over it as Governor. All through those years, in climates good and bad,—climates whose unvarying heat had tanned his face to a dull, colourless brown, —the attainment of this position had ever nestled somewhere at the back of his mind as a cherished hope. Now that hope had been realized, and Philip Hanbury-Erskine, loosing his hold on the verandah-rail, threw passionate hands aloft, and broke out into the oldest and surely the bitterest of all human cries, "O *vanitas vanitatum!* Which of us has his desire, or, having it, is satisfied?"

He had won back his kingdom; but the cruelty of convention still withheld from him a taste of his vanished youth. Should it? Must it? To the devil with conventions and respectabilities!

He had loosed his hold on the verandah-rail, and with it his grip upon the staid and straitened path, in the rut of which the feet of a Colonial Governor should rest. He passed into his bedroom with furiously beating heart, and presently youth and memory had wrought their miracle.

Sir Philip Hanbury-Erskine passed, I have said, into his bedroom, but the man who presently emerged therefrom was not, to all outward seeming, Sir Philip Hanbury-Erskine. One distinguished potentate had dropped for the nonce out of the Colonial Office List; one unconsidered entity the more had been added to the seething, shifting, brown thousands of the native quarter.

As he slipped over the rail of the ground-floor verandah —using in his exit from his own house as much caution as a thief might have adopted in effecting an entrance—he laughed to himself with a light-hearted recklessness that had not visited him for years. His staid, official self had been left among the tumbled bed-sheets and the castoff pyjamas in his room upstairs, and with it had remained the burden of advancing age. Once free of the house and within the shelter of the black shadows cast by a clump of palms, he stamped his bare feet into the cool fragrance of the dew-drenched grass, and with difficulty restrained a shout of exultation. He was young again—young, young, young! He was going back to "his own people," as he had always affectionately called them—the people among whom his youthful days had been spent; the people whose language, thoughts, and hopes and fears had of old been as his own. He was about to dip once again into the secret wells of native life, to hear old sounds, smell old smells, experience the old sensations, and for a brief hour to forget that he was one upon whose shoulders Fate had imposed the burden of official greatness, with all its dwarfing, soul-stunning conventionalities. For years—such long weary years—he had not been suffered to be natural, to be himself—even to be a Man. Instead, he

had been only an Official, only a temporary holder of a given post—one who was so much in the public eye, in the little worlds wherein he had laboured, that his every action, his every opinion, almost his every chance word, had been regarded as legitimate subject for comment and for criticism. Now, just for once, before it was too late, before his should have become a figure too familiar in the place for such wild pranks to be possible, he would steal from the hampering fictions wherewith his life was beset one little hour of freedom absolute, of unshackled individuality, of manhood and of youth.

It is one of the many astounding facts of Asia that two sets of human lives, the white and the native, can coexist side by side in a single locality, each completely ignorant of the other, each barely touching its neighbor on the outside edges, and then only at rare intervals. Yet the man who is, as it were, amphibious—to whom the *terra firma* of solid British convention, and the deep waters of Oriental life, are alike familiar—finds himself stepping from one to the other with appalling suddenness. Philip Hanbury-Erskine had in the days of his youth been one of these rare amphibians; and even now his memory held the key which can unlock the gates that are barred so jealously against all but a handful of his countrymen. Within half an hour of the time that had seen him leave the outer shell of His Excellency the Governor, the G.C.B. and the G.C.M.G., and all the rest of it, in a discarded heap upon his bedroom floor, Europe and its memories had been thrust into the obscure distance, and he was back once more in the old, old East.

His bare feet puddled the dust of the roadway, already set with the impressions of countless unshod feet; his eyes

dwelt lovingly upon the string-bedsteads placed in the five-foot ways before the native shops, and upon the white figures stretched corpse-like upon them; the throbbing beat of the drums, each thud and lilt of which held for him its inner meaning, came to his ears, the half-savage cadences keeping time to his own unrest; the reek—the old, familiar reek—of an Asiatic bazaar, pungent, penetrating, enervating, voluptuous, pervaded the stillness of the night, and he opened wide his nostrils and snuffed it in lovingly because it awoke in him such wild visions of the past.

Noiselessly as a shadow he flitted along the broad road—flanked by native shops and by the sleeping, white-clad figures aping the likeness of the dead—and presently turned down a narrow alley on his left, where old and dilapidated houses leaned helplessly on one another's shoulders, as though overcome with weariness, their roofs nearly joining ragged hands across the crooked fairway.

"Deplorably insanitary," was the comment of Sir Philip. "Homey, homey, homey!" cried the new-born man in him. "Unchanged by a hair's breadth in a quarter of a century! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be! Asia, my Asia!"

He groped his way down the straitened passage, for the bulging roofs overhead nearly excluded the moonlight, and paused presently to take his bearings.

"This must be the place," he murmured to himself. "I wonder if it is unchanged too. I'll try."

He crept into the shadow and drew near to a door sunken below the level of the alley, and rapped upon its panel with the knuckles of his hand. He rapped seven times with "dots" and "dashes," much as a telegraph operator manipu-

lates his instrument; and a moment later the door shuddered and creaked, and then drew cautiously backward for the space of a few inches.

"*Salam Aleikum!*" said a creaking, nasal voice.

"*Aleikum salam!*" returned Sir Philip mechanically.

"Whither comest thou?" pursued the voice.

"I come," said Sir Philip—and in a flash the old jingling formula, which he had not thought upon for years, recurred to his memory—

"I come from the forests that know no paths,
From the waters that hold no fish;
From the place where the wild kite veers and sails,
Where the man-apes drink as they swing from the boughs,
Where no Law runs and where men are free!"

"Enter, Brother," said the voice, and the door stood wide.

Philip had no need for the flaring torch which the woman who had opened to him held high above her head. The narrow passage down which they were walking, with its meaningless twists and turns, was to him at that moment the most familiar thing in all the world, though his feet had not trodden it for a quarter of a century.

It gave presently upon a big square room, the center of which was filled by a raised platform or dais, covered with thick carpets, upon which near a dozen natives, men and women, were seated playing cards. The only light in the place was shed by *damar*-torches fixed in heavy wooden stands. The players glanced up at the approach of the newcomer.

"Peace be upon this house and upon all who sit therein!" said Philip from the doorway.

"And upon thee peace!" came in answering chorus from the card-players.

"This be a Brother who hath strayed far," piped the woman, indicating Philip with a gesture that had in it something of proud proprietorship. "His password is that of the forest!"

The players laid down their cards and stared at Philip.

"That password hath not been used for twenty year and more," declared an old man who sat among them. "Say, little Brother, whither hast thou been, that thy password dates from the days of long ago?"

"I have been far," said Philip; "far, very far—farther than eye can see, farther than horse may gallop, farther than bird can fly! Listen! Even my mother-tongue hangs awry upon my lips!"

"Didst thou incur the sentence of Bombay?" asked the man quite simply. "Bombay," in the vernacular, stands for "transportation."

"Yes," said Philip, with a sullen nod; and he felt that he spoke the truth.

"What thing led thereto?" pursued the interrogator.

"Certain services I rendered to the Kompani," said Philip, again with perfect truth. In these lands, where the memory of "Old John Company Bahadur" still lingers, the Government continues to be known among the natives by the ancient title.

"The Kompani hath a long arm and a longer memory," said another of the card-players. "Art wise to return, my friend?"

"Of my wisdom, Brother, I am by no means assured," said Philip, feeling that he and truth were indeed walking hand-in-hand tonight. "But thou knowest the saying: 'A golden

rain in a stranger's land, and a pelt of hail in the land of thy fathers; yet dearer ever must thine own land be.' Tonight, I am feeling, according to the saying of the men of old, as feels the eel when it wins back to its mud-hole, the *sirih*-leaf to its vine, or the areca-nut to its twig!"

"And, behold, there is yet another returned this day," piped the woman who had let him in. " 'Tuan Iskin' we were wont to call him in the old days, and now he is Tuan Gubnor who is set to rule over all our land!"

"Of old he had a man's tongue in him," said one of the card-players, a lithe, clean-limbed, sharp-featured fellow of about Philip's own age, extravagantly dressed in silks of many hues, and armed, in defiance of the white men's law, with a native *kris* of wonderful workmanship. "He and I were as brothers, close in friendship as is the quick and the nail and the word passed amongst us that he was one of the Faithful."

"In very truth he was," screamed the woman, who had now seated herself on the edge of the dais. "Else, had he been an unbeliever, would I, Si-Bedah, have loved him?"

Philip Erskine, half hidden among the wavering shadows, looked keenly first at the man, then at the woman; and as he looked their faces came up through the mists of memory and grew plain to him, much as the face of a diver grows plain to the sight as it comes upward through still waters. Raja Sulong was the name of the man, he recalled—a roistering young scion of a royal house whose recklessness, extravagance, and courage had passed in those days into a byword. The woman—he would never unassisted have recognized her—was Bedah, the dancing-girl, of old the cause of much "madness," as the emphatic vernacular phrase has it, to the love-lorn youths of the city. In those days she had been a dainty crea-

ture with bright eyes, sleek flower-decked hair, delicately-tinted yellow cheeks, and a wondrous grace of movement. Now she was a hag, no less; for a quarter of a century brings old age to womanhood that blossoms prematurely before the teens are reached.

"But he did not love thee, mother," sneered one of the other women present—"or so men say."

"He did! He did!" screamed the woman who had of old been Bedah. "But he was not fashioned in the mould of common men. He loved me, but I was what fate had made me—a woman of the bazaar! He had no appetite for *sisa*—the scraps that remain when others have had their fill; wherefore he threw me to the dogs—such dogs as you, and you, and you!" And with a furious gesture she indicated several of the men present.

"Better such 'dogs,' as thou namest us, than a white man!" said one, and he turned aside to spit as a token of his unutterable disgust.

"Yet is he the only *man* that I have ever known," yelled the woman, her voice rising in tremulous, discordant sharps and flats. "He was full of pity and compassion, like Allah's self, the Merciful, the Compassionate. To him women-folk were not oxen to be yoked for the service of man, their master, but queens; and as a queen he treated me—*me*, Bedah, the dancing girl of the bazaar! I loved him and he loved me; but owing to the devil of perversity within him, never did our love know happiness. Yet had I rather been loved once after a fashion such as his than a thousand times by you,—men of monstrous passions and dwarfish souls. Now hath he come back to rule over this our land, and you, who prate sedition against the Kompani and hatch clutches of addled

plots, have a care, I say, have a care, for ye have now to deal with a Man!"

An angry growl broke from several of the men, and the old woman, drawing deeper into the shadows, fell to mumbling to herself as her emotions simmered away.

"Tomorrow I go to him," said Raja Sulong, "and he will receive me brotherly for the sake of old days. The pig-folk of the Kompani are in sore doubt anent the free tribes of the frontier, for their minds are divided as to the quarter whence the threatened raid will come. They think, poor deluded ones, that this said raid will be like unto its forerunners—a police stockade surprised, a few slaughtered Sikhs sent screaming to the terrible place, some fifty villages in flames, and then retreat. They know that the eve of the Great Combat is at hand, that the *Jehad* which shall see the extermination of the Infidel" (all present spat in unison at the word) "draws hourly more near, and that the Holy One of Paloh hath promised victory, final and everlasting, to the Children of the Prophet. Say, Brother," he continued, turning towards the shadow in which Philip had his seat, "hast thou also a mind to take a hand in this game of hazard which we are about to play, with men's lives for the dice and kingdoms for the stakes?"

"Allah aiding me," said Philip from the darkness in deep, guttural tones, "I too will take some little part in the said game!"

"And the plan, the plan?" said a youngster eagerly. "Hath all been thought out with wisdom and with strategy?"

"Judge ye, then; judge!" said Raja Sulong; and while the rest of the party gathered around him, he proceeded, by means of the contents of a match-box, some cards, and bone

counters to produce a rough map of the area which would be involved in the coming rising. Philip, watching keenly, heard the old names of men and places crop up one after the other; and though sprinkled among them there were a few which were to him unfamiliar, in half an hour he found himself in possession of the whole of the Raja's scheme.

"And tomorrow," that worthy concluded triumphantly, "I go to Tuan Iskin, who now hath been made Governor over us, and he will receive me in brotherly fashion for the sake of old memories. Then shall I fill his ears with false rumours and vain report; and he, reposing in me much confidence, will order all things as we, who have framed this plan, would elect that they should be ordered. In this is plainly to be discerned the finger of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, who is mindful ever of his children."

Philip rose to his feet and stepped forth very deliberately into the full glare of the *damar*-torches.

"What doth it profit to wait for the morrow?" he asked, in a soft and even voice. "Speak now, friend, that he whom you name Tuan Iskin may hear."

The recklessness that had been upon him that evening, as a veritable demoniacal possession, had mastered him now. Prudence had bidden him depart as he had come, undetected; but prudence he had thrown to the winds. He knew that he had but to follow her wise counsels, and presently he would find himself safe within the walls of Government House, where, armed with the authority that belongs to rulers, he would be able to baffle utterly the paltry schemes that had been laid bare for his inspection. But tonight, for a little space, he had promised himself, he would put off the things of his authority and would pass down, for the only,

for the last time, into the world of men, to be there just a man among his fellows. If he were to defeat the Raja Sulong and his conspiracies, he would compass his end by powers external to himself. Therefore he rose and spoke, and waited with a tense, quivering excitement, that was all pleasurable, to see what would result.

For an instant those who had heard him sat in stunned silence; then the room buzzed like a hive into which a stone had been flung. Men and women sprang to their feet—the former feeling for their weapons, the latter screaming their fear. Torches and brass ewers were overturned; bare feet scuttered and stamped; voices a-thrill with excitement gave vent to fierce ejaculations, though their tones were sunken to prudent whispers; and the flickering light of the unextinguished torches glinted upon the blades of knives held in nervous, eager hands.

A clutch fell upon Philip's arm, and he was drawn back against one of the immense bevelled pillars that stood at each corner of the dais; someone, crouching upon the floor at his feet, thrust a naked *sundang*—the stout Malayan broadsword—into his hand; and the voice of the hag, who of old had been Bedah the dancing-girl, whispered to him to be wary.

The solid wooden pillar that protected his back from all possibility of assault filled him with a splendid confidence.

"Speak now, friend, if thou hast a mind to speak," he said, and a laugh of sheer exultation broke from him. He had promised himself freedom from trammelling conventions, he had promised himself a revival of memories of his youth. His wildest hopes had never suggested the possibility of a rough-and-tumble such as now was imminent, a situation such as this, which belonged to what had so long seemed a

closed chapter of his history. Of old, too, life had spread inviting vistas ahead of him; now he had explored them and found them empty. His supreme indifference to the event, let what would befall, steeled him with a new courage. He was having a moment of big emotions, and the rest mattered not at all.

A breathless silence had fallen upon the room, out of which there presently emerged a voice which cried, "He is a dead man! He hath mastered our secrets! He must die!"

"Hold! Hold!" cried other voices.

Suddenly there was a scuttering rush made at him by three or four men, and Philip, swinging his broadsword, heard the flat of the blade tell loudly upon the faces of his opponents. He had as yet no occasion to use the edge, for two men went down and climbed painfully out of harm's way, while their fellows drew back into the darkness. "Well struck, but why didst thou not *slay?*" piped Bedah at his feet.

A loud knocking came suddenly from the outer door, and a hushed silence followed upon its heels. The knocking came again more insistent than before, blent with the rough voice of a white man demanding admittance in sadly mispronounced Malay.

"The police, the police!" whispered half a dozen voices, and the last torch was extinguished, while bare feet pattered hastily across the mat-strewn floor.

Heavy blows were falling now upon the outer door. The police were breaking it in.

"Come, heart of my heart," whispered Bedah; and holding his hand in hers, she led him down from the dais and into some by-passage of this human rabbit-warren. Still clutching his broadsword, he followed blindly through the intense

darkness; and as the shouts of the police and the hammering upon the yielding door grew faint in the distance, he found himself being led out into the moonlight.

The passage gave upon a narrow alley,—the identity of which came back to Philip's memory, as so many identities had recurred that night,—and as Philip and his guide emerged through the straitened doorway a lithe figure flung itself upon them, the moonlight glinting on a bared blade. Philip saw in a flash the nervous, muscular arm upraised, the snake-like *kris* poised aloft, the fierce face of Raja Sulong,—with flaming eyes, hair flying backward wildly, and tilted prominent chin,—and knew that the broadsword he was himself raising in his defense was stayed, as weapons are arrested in a nightmare, by the lintel of the door.

With a grunt from Raja Sulong the *kris* descended, and Philip, feeling his impotence, nerved himself to receive the blow; but with a shrill scream Bedah threw herself upon him, and the snaky blade was buried in her back. Philip, freeing himself from her grip, leaped clear of the doorway, and concentrating all his strength and all his fury in a single stroke, brought the broadsword down upon the head of Raja Sulong, cleaving it to the cheek-bones. The man's body dropped limply across the body of the woman.

Philip, kneeling on one knee, turned Bedah on her side, and laid a hand above the region of her heart. No faintest throb responded. Stooping low above her, he kissed her reverently, and rising, turned and left her.

"A life for a life," he murmured, "and his was taken in self-defense and hers was given for me. God forgive me for this night's work, for I shall never forgive myself."

The dawn was breaking greyly as Sir Philip Hanbury-

Erskine was born once more into the official world of which he was still by no means the least distinguished ornament.

Next day, clothed and in his right mind, he wrote the famous Minute forecasting the plan of campaign which the natives were about to adopt in the threatened frontier uprising—the Minute upon which rests the almost superstitious belief of his subordinates in his prescience and understanding of native character. Later, as in duty bound, he bade the police make diligent search for the author of the double murder reported to have occurred upon the previous night in an alley of the native city. Later still he opened a charity bazaar, and made a speech so strikingly appropriate to the occasion that it has been pirated and sold widely for the benefit of uninventive country vicars.

And when the day was ended, in the dead unhappy night, he told himself that old age had come upon him in the space of a single hour.

THE NAP [1]

by WALTER DE LA MARE

THE autumnal afternoon was creeping steadily on towards night; the sun after the morning's rain was now —from behind thinning clouds—glinting down on the chimney-pots and slate roofs of Mr. Thripp's suburb. And the day being a Saturday, across Europe, across England, an immense multitudinous stirring of humanity was in progress. It had begun in remote Australia and would presently sweep across the Atlantic into vast America, resembling the rustling of an ant-heap in a pine wood in sunny June. The Christian world, that is, was preparing for its weekly half-holiday; and Mr. Thripp was taking his share.

As if time were of unusual importance to him, two clocks stood on his kitchen mantelpiece: one, gay as a peepshow in the middle, in a stained wood case with red and blue flowers on the glass front; the other an "alarum"—which though it was made of tin had a voice and an appearance little short of the brazen. Above them, as if entirely oblivious to their ranting, a glazed King Edward VII stared stolidly out of a Christmas lithograph, with his Orders on his royal breast.

Mr. Thripp's kitchen table was at this moment disordered

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with the remains of a meal, straggling over a tablecloth that had now gallantly completed its full week's service. Like all Saturday dinners in his household, this has been a hugger-mugger dinner—one of vehement relays. Mr. Thripp himself had returned home from his office at a quarter to two—five minutes after his daughter Millie and Mrs. Thripp had already begun. Charlie Thripp had made his appearance a little before the hour; and James—who somehow had never become Jim or Jimmie—arrived soon afterwards. To each his due, kept warm.

But the hasty feeding was now over. Mr. Thripp in his shirt-sleeves, and with his silver watch-chain disposed upon his front, had returned once more from the scullery with his empty tray. He was breathing heavily, for he inclined nowadays, as he would sometimes confess, to the *ongbong-pong*. He had remarkably muscular arms for a man of his sedentary profession, that of ledger-clerk in Messrs. Bailey, Bailey and Company's counting house. His small eyes, usually half-hidden by their plump lids, were of a bright, clear blue. His round head was covered with close-cut hair; he had full-ish lips, and his ample jowl always appeared as if it had been freshly shaved—even on Saturday afternoons.

Mr. Thripp delighted in Saturday afternoons. He delighted in housework. Though he never confessed it to a living soul (and even though it annoyed Tilda to hear him) he delighted too in imitating the waitresses in the tea-shops, and rattled the plates and dishes together as if they were made of a material unshatterable and everlasting. When alone at the sink he would hiss like a groom currying a full-grown mare. He packed the tray full of dirty dishes once more, and returned into the steam of the scullery.

"You get along now, Tilda," he said to his wife who was drying up. "We shall have that Mrs. Brown knocking every minute, and that only flusters you."

Mrs. Thripp looked more ill-tempered than she really was —with her angular face and chin, pitch-dark eyes, and dark straight hair. With long damp fingers she drew back a limp strand of hair that had straggled over her forehead.

"What beats me is, you never take a bit of enjoyment yourself," she replied. "It isn't fair to *us*. I slave away, morning, noon and night; but that's just as things are. But other husbands get out and about; why not you? *Let* her knock! She's got too much money to waste; that's what's the matter with *her*. I don't know what you wouldn't take her for in that new get-up she's got."

Then what the devil do you go about with her for? were the words that entered Mr. Thripp's mind; and as for slaving, haven't I just *asked* you to give over? Have reason, woman! But he didn't utter them. "That'll be all right," he said instead, in his absurd genial way. "You get on along off, Tilda; I'll see to all this. I enjoy myself my own way, don't you fear. Did you never hear of the selfish sex? Well, that's me!"

"Oh yes, I know all about that," said his wife sententiously: "a pinch of salt on a bird's tail! But there's no need for sarcasms. Now do be careful with that dish, there. It don't belong to us, but to next door. She gave me one of her pancakes on it—and nothing better than a shapeless bit of leather, either. Just to show she was once in service as a cook-general, I suppose; though she never owns to it."

A spiteful old mischief-maker, if you asked me, was Mr.

Thripp's inward comment. But "Oh well, Tilda, she means all right," he said soothingly. "Don't you worry. Now get along off with you; it's a hard day, Saturday, but you won't know yourself when you come down again." As if forced into a line of conduct she deprecated and despised, Tilda flung her wet tea-cloth over a chair, and, with heart beating gaily beneath her shrunken breast, hastened away.

Mr. Thripp began to whistle under his breath as he turned on the hot water tap again. It was the one thing he insisted on—a lavish supply of hot water. He was no musician and only himself knew the tune he was in search of; but it kept him going as vigorously as a company of grenadiers on the march, and he invariably did his household jobs against time. It indulged a sort of gambling instinct in him; and the more he hated his job the louder he whistled. So as a small boy he had met the challenge of the terrors of the dark. "Keep going," he would say. "Don't let things mess over. That's waste!"

At that moment, his elder son, James, appeared in the scullery doorway. James took after his mother's side of the family. In his navy blue serge suit, light-brown shoes, mauve socks and spotted tie, he showed what careful dressing can do for a man. A cigarette sagged from his lower lip. His head was oblong, and flat-sided, and his eyes had a damp and vacant look. He thrust his face an inch or two into the succulent steam beyond the doorway.

"Well, dad, I'm off," he said.

Oh, my God! thought his father; if only you'd drop those infernal fags. Smoke, smoke, smoke, morning to night; and you that pasty-looking I can't imagine what the girl sees in you, with your nice superior ways. "Right you are,

my son," he said aloud, "I won't ask you to take a hand! Enjoy yourself while you're young, I say. But slow and steady does it. Where might *you* be bound for this afternoon?"

"Oh, tea with Ivy's people," said James magnanimously. "Pretty dull going, I can tell you."

"But it won't be tea all the evening, I suppose?" said his father, pushing a steaming plate into the plate-rack.

"Oh, I dare say we shall loaf off to a Revoo or something," said James. He tossed his cigarette end into the sink, but missed the refuse strainer. Mr. Thripp picked it up with a fork and put it into the receptacle it was intended for, while James "lit up" again.

"Well, so long," said his father, "don't spoil that Sunday-go-to-Meeting suit of yours with all this steam. And by the way, James, I owe you five shillings for that little carpentering job you did for me. It's on the sitting-room shelf."

"Right ho. Thanks, dad," said James. "I thought it was six. But never mind."

His father flashed a glance at his son—a glance like the smouldering of a coal. "That so? Well, make it six, then," he said. "And I'm much obliged."

"Oh, that's nothing," replied James graciously. "Cheerio; don't overdo it, dad."

Mr. Thripp returned to his washing-up. He was thinking rapidly with an extraordinary medley of feeling—as if he were not one Mr. Thripp, but many. None the less, his whistling broke out anew, as though, like a canary, in rivalry with the gushing of the tap. After loading up his tray with crockery for the last time, he put its contents away in the cupboard, and on the kitchen dresser; cleansed the drain,

swabbed up the sink, swabbed up the cracked cement floor, hung up his dish-clout, rinsed his hands, and returned into the kitchen.

Millie in a neat, tailor-made costume which had that week marvellously survived dyeing, was now posed before the little cracked square of kitchen looking-glass. She was a pale, slim thing. Her smooth hair, of a lightish brown streaked with gold and parted in the middle, resembled a gilded frame surrounding her mild angelic face—a face such as the mediæval sculptors in France delighted to carve on their altar-pieces. Whatever she wore became her—even her skimpy old pale-blue flannel dressing-gown.

She turned her narrow pretty face sidelong under her hat and looked at her father. She looked at every human being like that—even at her own reflection in a shop window, even at a flower in a glass. She spent her whole life subtly, instinctively, wordlessly courting. She had as many young men as the White Queen has pawns: though not all of them remained long in her service.

It's all very well to be preening yourself in that mirror, my girl, her father was thinking, but you'd be far better off in the long run if you did a bit more to help your mother, even though you do earn a fraction of your living. More thinking and less face, *I* say. And all that——! But "Why, I never see such a girl as you, Millie," he greeted her incredulously, "for looking your best! And such a best, too, my dear. Which young spark is it to be *this* afternoon? Eh?"

"Sparks! dad; how you do talk. Why, I don't hardly know, dad. Sparks!" Millie's voice almost invariably ran down the scale like the notes of a dulcimer muted with vel-

yet. "I wasn't thinking of anybody in particular," she went on, continuing to watch her moving mouth in the glass, "but I promised Nellie Gibbs I . . . One thing, I am not going to stay out long on a day like this!"

"What's the matter with the day?" Mr. Thripp enquired.

"The matter! Why, look at it! It's a fair filthy mug of a day." The words slipped off her pretty curved lips like pearls over satin. A delicious anguish seemed to have arched the corners of her eyelids.

"Well, ain't there such a thing as a mackingtosh in the house, then?" enquired her father briskly.

"Mackingtosh! Over this! Oh, isn't that just like a man! I should look a perfect guy." She stood gazing at him, like a gazelle startled by the flurry of a breeze across the placid surface of its drinking-pool.

Now see you here, my girl, that see-saw voice inside her father was expostulating once more, what's the good of them fine silly airs? I take you for an honest man's daughter with not a ha'penny to spare on fal-lals and monkey-traps. *That* won't get you a husband. But Mr. Thripp once more ignored its interruption. He smiled almost roguishly out of his bright blue eyes at his daughter. "Ask *me* what I take you for, my dear? Why, I take you for a nice, well-meaning, though remarkably plain young woman. Eh? But there, there, don't worry. What I say is, make sure of the best (and the best that's *inside*) and let the other young fellows go."

He swept the last clean fork on the table into the drawer and folded up the tablecloth.

"Oh, dad, how you do go on!" breathed Millie. "It's always fellows you're thinking of. As if fellows made any

difference." Her glance roamed a little startledly round the room. "What *I* can't understand," she added quickly, "is why we never have a clean tablecloth. How can anybody ask a friend home to their own place if that's the kind of thing they are going to eat off of?" The faint nuance of discontent in her voice only made it the more enchanting and seductive. She might be Sleeping Beauty babbling out of her dreams.

A cataract of invective coursed through the channels of Mr. Thripp's mind. He paused an instant to give the soiled tablecloth another twist and the table another prolonged sweep of that formidable right arm which for twenty-three years had never once been lifted in chastisement of a single one of his three offspring. Then he turned and glanced at the fire.

"I wouldn't," he said, seizing the shovel, "I wouldn't let mother hear that, my dear. We all have a good many things to put up with. And what I say is, all in good time. *You* bring that Mr. Right along! and I can promise him not only a clean tablecloth but something appetising to eat off of it. A bit of a fire in the sitting-room too, for that matter."

"You're a good sort, dad," said Millie, putting up her face to be kissed—in complete confidence that the tiny powder-puff in her vanity-bag would soon adjust any possible mishap to the tip of her small nose. "But I don't believe you ever think *I* think of anything."

"Good-bye, my dear," said Mr. Thripp; "don't kiss me. I am all of a smother with the washing-up."

"Toodle-loo, ma," Millie shrilled, as her father followed her out into the passage. He drew open the front door, secreting his shirt-sleeves well behind it in case of curious passers-by.

"Take care of yourself, my dear," he called after her, "and don't be too late."

"Late!" tossed Millie, "any one would think I had been coddled up in a hot-house."

Out of a seething expense of spirit in Mr. Thripp's mind only a few words made themselves distinct. "Well, never mind, my precious dear. I'm *with* you for ever, whether you know it or not."

He returned into the house, and at once confronted his younger son, Charlie, who was at that moment descending the stairs. As a matter of fact he was descending the stairs like fifteen Charlies, and nothing so much exasperated his father as to feel the whole house rock on its foundations at each fresh impact.

"Off to your Match, my boy?" he cried. "Some day I expect you will be taking a hand in the game yourself. Better share than watch!"

Every single Saturday afternoon during the football season Mr. Thripp ventured to express some such optimistic sentiment as this. But Charlie had no objection; not at all.

"Not me, dad," he assured him good-humouredly. "I'd sooner pay a bob to see other fellows crocked up. You couldn't lend me one, I suppose?"

"Lend you what?"

"Two tanners; four frippenies; a twelfth of a gross of coppers."

Good God! yelled Mr. Thripp's inward monitor, am I *never* to have a minute's rest or relief? But it yelled in vain.

"Right you are, my son," he said instead, and thrusting his fleshy hand into his tight-fitting trouser-pocket he brought out a fistful of silver and pence. "And there," he

added, "there's an extra sixpence free, *gratis*, and for nothing, for the *table d'hôte*. All I say is, Charlie, better say 'give' when there isn't much chance of keeping to the 'lend.' I don't want to preach; but that's always been *my* rule; and kept it too, as well as I could."

Charles counted the coins in his hand, and looked at his father. He grinned companionably. He invariably found his father a little funny to look at. He seemed somehow to be so remote from anything you could mean by things as they are, and things as they are now. He wasn't so much old-fashioned, as just a Gone-by. He was his father, of course, just as a jug is a jug, and now and then Charlie was uncommonly fond of him, longed for his company, and remembered being a little boy walking with him in the Recreation Ground. But he wished he wouldn't be always giving advice, and especially the kind of advice which he had himself assiduously practised.

"Ta, dad," he said; "that's doing me proud. I'll buy you a box of Havanas with what's over from the *table d'hôte*. And now we're square. Good-bye, dad." He paused as he turned to go. "Honour bright," he added, "I hope I shall be earning a bit more soon, and then I shan't have to ask you for anything."

A curious shine came into Mr. Thripp's small lively eyes; it seemed almost to spill over on to his plump cheeks. It looked as if those cheeks had even paled a little.

"Why, that's all right, Charlie, my boy," he mumbled, "I'd give you the skin off me body if it would be of any use. That's all right. Don't stand about too long but just keep going. What I can't abide is these young fellows that swallow down their enjoyments like so much black draught.

But we are not that kind of a family, I'm thankful to say."

"Not me!" said Charles, with a grimace like a good-humoured marmoset, and off he went to his soccer match.

Hardly had the sound of his footsteps ceased—and Mr. Thripp stayed there in the passage, as if to listen till they were for ever out of hearing—when there came a muffled secretive tap on the panel of the door. At sound of it the genial podgy face blurred and blackened.

Oh, it's you, you cringing Jezebel, is it?—the thought scurried through his mind like a mangy animal. Mr. Thripp indeed was no lover of the ultra-feminine. He either feared it, or hated it, or both feared *and* hated it. It disturbed his even tenour. It was a thorn in the side of the Mr. Thripp that not only believed second thoughts were best, but systematically refused to give utterance to first. Any sensible person, he would say, ought to know when he's a bit overtaxed, and act according.

The gloved fingers, Delilah-like, had tapped again. Mr. Thripp tiptoed back into the kitchen, put on his coat, and opened the door.

"Oh, it's you, Mrs. Brown," he said. "Tilda won't be a moment. She's upstairs titivating. Come in and take a seat."

His eyes meanwhile were informing that inward censor of his precisely how many inches thick the mauvish face-powder lay on Mrs. Brown's cheek, the liver-coloured lipstick on her mouth, and the dye on her loaded eye-lashes. Those naturally delicate lashes swept down in a gentle fringe upon her cheek as she smiled in reply. She was a graceful thing, too, but practised; and far more feline, far far more body-conscious than Millie. No longer in the blush of youth

either; though still mistress of the gift that never leaves its predestined owner—the impulse and power to fascinate mere man. Still, there were limitations even to Mrs. Brown's orbit of attraction, and Mr. Thripp might have been Neptune itself he kept himself so far out in the cold.

He paused a moment at the entrance to the sitting-room, until his vistor had seated herself. He was eyeing her Frenchified silk scarf, her demure new hat, her smart high-heeled patent-leather shoes, but his eyes dropped like stones when he discovered her own dark languishing ones surveying him from under that hat's beguiling brim.

"Nice afternoon after the rain," he remarked instantly. "Going to the pictures, I suppose? As for meself, these days make me want to be out and in at the same time. It's the musty, fusty, smoky dark of them places *I* can't stand."

Mrs. Brown rarely raised her voice much above a whisper. Indeed it appeared to be a physical effort to her to speak at all. She turned her face a little sidelong, her glance on the carpet. "Why, it's the dark I enjoy, Mr. Thripp," she said. "It"—and she raised her own—"it rests the eyes so."

For an instant Mr. Thripp's memory returned to Millie, but he made no comment.

"Here's Mrs. Brown, Tilda," he called up the staircase. Good heavens, the woman might as well be the real thing, the voice within was declaring. But the words that immediately followed up this piece of news were merely, "You'll be mighty surprised to hear, Tilda, Mrs. Brown's got a new hat." A faint catcall of merriment descended the stairs.

"Oh, now, Mr. Thripp, listen to that!" whispered the peculiar voice from out of the little airless sitting-room, "you always did make fun of me, Mr. Thripp. Do I deserve it, now?"

A gentle wave of heat coursed over Mr. Thripp as he covertly listened to these accents, but he was out of sight.

"Fun, Mrs. Brown? Never," he retorted gallantly; "it's only my little way." And then to his immense relief on lifting his eyes, discovered Tilda already descending the stairs.

He saw the pair of them off. Being restored to his coat, he could watch them clean down the drying street from his gate-post. Astonishing, he thought, what a difference there can be in two women's backs! Tilda's, straight, angular, and respectable, as you might say; and that other—sinuous, seductive, as if it were as crafty a means of expression as the very smile and long-lashed languishments upon its owner's face. "What can the old woman see in her!" he muttered to himself; "damned if *I* know!" On this problem Mr. Thripp firmly shut his front door. Having shut it he stooped to pick up a tiny white feather on the linoleum; and stooping, sighed.

At last his longed-for hour had come—the hour for which his very soul pined throughout each workaday week. Not that it was always his happy fate to be left completely alone like this. At times, indeed, he had for company far too much housework to leave him any leisure. But to-day the dinner things were cleared away, the washing-up was over, the tables fair as a baker's board, the kitchen spick and span, the house empty. He would just have to look round his own and Tilda's bedroom (and, maybe, the boys' and

Millie's). And then the chair by the fire; the simmering kettle on the hearth; and the soft tardy autumnal dusk fading quietly into night beyond the window.

It was a curious thing that a man who loved his family so much, who was as desperately loyal to every member of it as a she-wolf is to her cubs, should yet find this few minutes' weekly solitude a luxury such as only Paradise, one would suppose, would ever be able to provide.

Mr. Thripp went upstairs and not only tidied up his own and Tilda's bedroom, and went on to Millie's and the boys', but even gave a sloosh to the bath, slid the soap out of the basin where Charles had abandoned it, and hung up the draggled towels again in the tiny bathroom. What a place looks like when you come back to it from your little enjoyments—it's *that* makes all the difference to your feelings about a home. These small chores done, Mr. Thripp put on an old tweed coat with frayed sleeves, and returned to the kitchen. In a quarter of an hour that too more than ever resembled a new pin.

Then he glanced up at the clocks; between them the time was a quarter to four. He was amazed. He laid the tea, took out of his little old leather bag a pot of jam which he had bought for a surprise on his way home, and arranged a bunch of violets in a small jar beside Tilda's plate. But apart from these family preparations, Mr. Thripp was now depositing a demure little glossy brown teapot all by itself on the kitchen range. This was his Eureka. This was practically the only sensual *secret* luxury Mr. Thripp had ever allowed himself since he became a family man. Tilda's cooking was good enough for him provided that the others had their little dainties now and then. He enjoyed his beer,

and could do a bit of supper occasionally with a friend. But the ritual of these solitary Saturday afternoons reached its climax in this small pot of tea. First the nap sweet as nirvana in his easy-chair, then the tea, and then the still, profound quarter of an hour's musing before the door-knocker began again.

Having pulled down the blind a little in order to prevent any chance of draught, Mr. Thripp eased his bootlaces, sat himself in his chair, his cheek turned a little away from the window, his feet on the box that usually lay under the table, and with fingers clasped over his stomach composed himself to sleep. The eyelids closed; the lips set; the thumbs twitched now and again. He breathed deep, and the kettle began a whispered anthem—as if a myriad voices were singing on and on without need of pause or rest, a thousand thousand leagues away.

But now there was none to listen; and beyond quiet hung thick in the little house. Only the scarce-perceptible hum of the traffic at the end of the narrow side street was audible on the air. Within, the two clocks on the chimney-piece quarrelled furiously over the fleeting moments, attaining unanimity only in one of many ticks. Ever and again a tiny scutter of dying ashes rejoined those that had gone before in the pan beneath the fire. Soon even these faint stirrings became inaudible and in a few moments Mr. Thripp's spirit would have wafted itself completely free awhile from its earthly tenement, if, suddenly, the image of Millie—more vivid than even the actual sight of her a few minutes before—had not floated up into the narrow darkness of her father's tight-shut eyes.

But this was not the image of Millie as her father usually

saw her. A pathetic earthly melancholy lay over the fair angelic features. The young cheek was sunken in; the eye was faded, dejected, downcast; and her cheek was stubbornly turned away from her father, as if she resented or was afraid of his scrutiny.

At this vision a headlong anxiety darted across Mr. Thripp's half-slumbering mind. His heart began heavily beating: and then a pulse in his forehead. Where was she now? What forecast, what warning was this? Millie was no fool. Millie knew her way about. And her mother if anything was perhaps a little too censorious of the ways of this wicked world. If you keep on talking at a girl, hinting of things that might otherwise not enter her head—that in itself is dangerous. Love itself even must edge in warily. The tight-shut lids blinked anxiously. But where was Millie now? Somewhere indoors, but where? Who with?

Mr. Thripp saw her first in a teashop, sitting opposite a horrid young man with his hair greased back over his low round head, and a sham pin in his tie. His elbows were on the marble-top table, and he was looking at Millie very much as a young but experienced pig looks at his wash-trough. Perhaps she was at the Pictures? Dulcet accents echoed into the half-dreaming mind— "But I enjoy the dark, Mr. Thripp. . . . it rests the eyes." Why did the woman talk as if she had never more than half a breath to spare? Rest her eyes! She never at any rate wanted to rest the eyes of any fool in trousers who happened to be within glimpse of her own. It was almost unnaturally dark in the cinema of Mr. Thripp's fancy at this moment; yet he could now see his Millie with her pale, harmless, youthful

face, as plainly as if she were the "close-up" of some star from Los Angeles on the screen. And now the young man in her company was almost as fair as herself, with a long-chinned sheepish face and bolting eyes; and the two of them were amorously hand in hand.

For a moment Mr. Thripp sat immovable, as if a bugle had sounded in his ear. Then he deliberately opened his eyes and glanced about him. The November daylight was already beginning to fade. Yes, he would have a word with Millie—but not when she came home that evening. It is always wiser to let the actual coming-home be pleasant and welcoming. To-morrow morning, perhaps; that is, if her mother was not goading at her for being late down and lackadaisical when there was so much to be done. Nevertheless, all in good time he would have a little quiet word with her. He would say only what he would not afterwards regret having said. He had meant to do that ages ago; but you mustn't flood a house with water when it's not on fire. She was but a mere slip of a thing—like a flower, not a wild flower, but one of those sweet waxen flowers you see blooming in a florist's window—which you must be careful with and not just expose anywhere.

And yet how his own little place here could be compared with anything in the nature of a hot-house he could not for the life of him understand. Delicate-looking! Everybody said that. God bless me, perhaps her very lackadaisicalness was a symptom of some as yet hidden malady. Good God, supposing! . . . He would take her round to see the doctor as soon as he could. But the worst of it was you had to do these things on your own responsibility. And though Mr.

Thripp was now a man close on fifty, sometimes he felt as if he could no longer bear the burden of all these responsibilities. Sometimes he felt as if he couldn't endure to brood over them as he was sometimes wont to do. If he did, he would snap. People *looked* old; but nobody was really old inside; not old at least in the sense that troubles were any the lighter, or forebodings any the more easily puffed away; or tongues easier to keep still; or tempers to control.

And talking of tempers reminded him of Charlie. What on earth was going to be done with Charlie? There was no difficulty in conjuring up, in seeing Charlie—that is if he really did go every Saturday to a football match. But Charlie was now of an age when he might think it a fine manly thing to be loafing about the counter of a pub talking to some flaxen barmaid with a tuppenny cigar between his teeth. Still, Mr. Thripp refused to entertain more than a glimpse of this possibility. He saw him at this moment as clearly as if in a peepshow, packed in with hundreds of other male creatures close as sardines in a tin, with their check caps and their "fags," and their staring eyes revolving in consort as if they were all attached to one wire, while that idiotic ball in the middle of the arena coursed on its helpless way from muddy boot to muddy boot.

Heaven knows, Mr. Thripp himself was nothing much better than a football! You had precious small chance in this life of choosing which boot should give you the next kick. And what about that smug new creeping accountant at the office with his upstart airs and new-fangled book-keeping methods!

Mr. Thripp's mouth opened in a yawn, but managed only to achieve a fraction of it. He rubbed his face; his eyes

now shut again. It was not as if any of your children were of much practical help. Why should they be when they could never understand that what you pined for, what you really needed was not only practical help but some inward grace and clearness of mind wherewith they could slip in under your own thoughts and so share your point of view without all that endless terrifying argumentation. He didn't *always* give advice to suit his own ends; and yet whenever he uttered a word to James, tactfully suggesting that in a world like this—however competent a man may be and however sure of himself—you *had* to push your way, you had to make your weight felt, James always looked at him as if he were a superannuated orang-outang in a cage—an orang-outang with queer and not particularly engaging habits.

He wouldn't mind even that so much if only James would take his cigarette out of his mouth when he talked. To see that bit of stained paper attached to his son's lower lip wagging up and down, beneath that complacent smile and those dark helpless-looking eyes, all but sent Mr. Thripp stark staring mad at times. Once, indeed, he had actually given vent to the appalling mass of emotion hoarded up like water in a reservoir in his mind. The remembrance of the scene that followed made him even at this moment tremble in his chair. Thank God, thank God, he hadn't often lost control like that.

Well, James would be married by this time next year, he supposed. And what a nice dainty pickle he was concocting for himself! Mr. Thripp knew that type of young woman, with the compressed lips, and the thin dry hair, and the narrow hips. She'd be a "good manager," right enough, but there's a point in married life where good managing is little

short of being in a lunatic asylum between two iron-faced nurses and yourself in a strait waistcoat. The truth of it was, with all his fine airs and neat finish, James hadn't much common-sense. He had a fair share of brains; but brains are no good if you are merely self-opinionated and contemptuous on principle. James was not like anybody in Mr. Thripp's own family. He was a Simpkins.

And then suddenly it was as if some forgotten creature in Mr. Thripp's mind or heart had burst out crying; and the loving look he thereupon cast on his elder son's face in his mind was almost maudlin in its sentimentality. He would do anything for James within reason: anything. But then it would have to be within James's reason—not his own. He knew that. Why he would himself marry the young woman and exult in being a bigamist if only he could keep his son out of her way. And yet, and yet; maybe there were worse women in the world than your stubborn, petulant, niggardly, half-sexed nagger. Mr. Thripp knew a nagger of old. His brother's wife, Fanny, had been a nagger. She was dead now, and George was a free man—but drinking far too much.

Well, as soon as he could get a chance, Mr. Thripp, sitting there in his chair decided, he would have another good think; but that probably wouldn't be until next Saturday, if then. You can't think to much purpose—except in a worried disjointed fashion—when you are in the noise of an office or keeping yourself from saying things you have no wish to say. The worst of it was it was not much good discussing these matters with Tilda. Like most women, she always went off at a tangent. And when you came down to it, and

wanted to be reasonable, there was so little left to discuss. Besides, Tilda had worries enough of her own.

At this moment Mr. Thripp once more opened his eyes wide. The small kitchen loomed beatifically rosy and still in the glow of the fire. Evening had so far edged on its way now that he could hardly see the hands of his two clocks. He could but just detect the brass pendulum—imperturbably chopping up eternity into fragments of time. He craned forward; in five minutes he ought to be brewing his little private pot of tea. Even if he nodded off now, he would be able to wake in time, but five minutes doesn't leave *much* margin for dropping off. He shifted a little on his chair, and once more shut his eyes. And in a moment or two his mind went completely blank.

He seemed to have been suddenly hauled up helpless with horror into an enormous vacancy—to be dangling unconfined and motionless in space. A scene of wild sandy hills and spiky trees—an illimitable desert, came riding towards him out of nothingness. He hung motionless, and was yet sweeping rapidly forward, but for what purpose and to what goal there was not the smallest inkling. The wilderness before him grew ever more desolate and menacing. He began to be deadly afraid; groaned; stirred—and found himself with fingers clenched on its arms sitting bolt upright in his chair. And the hands of the clock looked to be by a hair's breadth precisely in the same position as when he had started on that ghastly nightmare journey. His face blanched. He sat appalled, listening to an outrageous wauling of voices. It was as though a thousand demons lay in wait for him beneath his window and were summoning him to his doom.

And all this nightmare horror of mind was due solely to a wailing of cats! And yet even as with flesh still creeping he listened on to this clamour, it was so human in effect that it might be multitudinous shades of the unborn that were thronging about the glass of his window. Mr. Thripp rose from his chair, his face transfigured with rage and desire for revenge. He went out into the scullery, opened the back door, and at sound of him the caterwauling instantly ceased.

And almost as instantly his fury died out in him. The cold evening air fanned his forehead. He smiled quixotically, and looked about him. There came a furtive rustle in the bushes. "Ah, there you are!" he sang out gently into the dark. "Have your play while you can, my fine gentlemen! Take it like your betters, for it's—a sight too soon over."

Above the one cramped leafless elder-tree in his yard a star was pricking the sky. A ground mist, too, was rising, already smelling a little stale. Great London and its suburbs appeared to be in for one of its autumnal fogs. A few of the upper windows opposite loomed dim with light. Mr. Thripp's neighbours, it seemed, were also preparing to be off to the pictures or the music-halls. It was very still, and the air was damp and clammy.

As he stood silent there in the obscurity a deepening melancholy crept over his mind, though he was unaware into what gloomy folds and sags his face had fallen. He suddenly remembered that his rates would have to be paid next week. He remembered that Christmas would soon be coming, and that he was getting too old to enter into the fun of the thing as he used to do. His eyes rolled a little in their

sockets. What the . . . ! his old friend within began to suggest. But Mr. Thripp himself did not even enunciate the missing "hell." Instead, he vigorously rubbed his face with his stout capable hand. "Well, fog anyhow don't bring rain," he muttered to himself.

And as if at a signal his own cat and his next-door neighbour's cat and Mrs. Brown's cat and the cat of the painter and decorator whose back garden abutted his own, together with the ginger-and-white cat from a news-vendor's beyond, with one consent broke out once more into their Sabbath eve quintette. The many-stranded strains of it mounted up into the heavens like the yells of demented worshippers of Baal.

"And, as I say, I don't blame ye neether," Mr. Thripp retorted, with a grim smile. "If you knew, my friends, how narrowly you some of you escaped a bucket of cold water when you couldn't even see out of your young eyes, you'd sing twice as loud."

He shut the door and returned to his fireside. No more hope of sleep that afternoon. He laughed to himself for sheer amusement at his disappointment. What kids men were! He stirred the fire; it leapt brightly as if intent to please him. He pushed the kettle on; lit the lamp; warmed his little privy glossy-brown teapot, and fetched out a small private supply of the richest Ceylon from behind some pots in the saucepan cupboard.

Puffs of steam were now vapouring out of the spout of the kettle with majestic pomposity. Mr. Thripp lifted it off the coals and balanced it over his teapot. And at that very instant the electric bell—which a year or two ago in a moment of the strangest caprice Charles had fixed up in

the corner—began jangling like a fire-alarm. Mr. Thripp hesitated. If this was one of the family, he was caught. Caught, that is, unless he was mighty quick in concealing these secret preparations. If it was Tilda—well, valour was the better part of discretion. He poured the water into the pot, replaced the lid, and put it on to the oventop to stew. With a glance of satisfaction at the spinster-like tidiness of the room, he went out, and opened the door.

"Why, it's Millie!" he said, looking out at the slim-shouldered creature standing alone there under the porch; "you don't mean to say it's you, my dear?"

Millie made no reply. Her father couldn't see her face, partly because the lamp-post stationed in front of the house three doors away gave at best a feeble light, and partly because her features were more or less concealed by her hat. She pushed furtively past him without a word, her head still stooping out of the light.

Oh, my God, what's wrong now? yelled her father's inward monstrous monitor, frenziedly clanging the fetters on wrist and ankle. "Come right in, my pretty dear," said Mr. Thripp seductively, "this *is* a pleasant surprise. And what's more, between you and me and the gatepost, I have just been making myself a cup of tea. Not a word to mother; it's *our* little secret. We'll have it together before the others come in."

He followed his daughter into the kitchen.

"Lor, what a glare you are in, pa!" she said in a small muffled voice. She turned the wick of the lamp down so low that in an instant or two the flame flickered and expired, and she seated herself in her father's chair by the fire. But the flamelight showed her face now. It was paler even

than usual. A strand of her gilded pale-brown hair had streaked itself over her blue-veined temple. She looked as if she had been crying. Her father, his hands hanging down beside him as uselessly as the front paws of a performing bear, watched her in an appalling trepidation of spirit. This then was the secret of his nightmare; for this the Cats of Fate had chorused!

"What's wrong, Millie love? Are you overtired, my girl? There! Don't say nothing for a minute or two. See, here's my little pot just meant for you and me!"

Millie began to cry again, pushing her ridiculous little handkerchief close to her eyes. Mr. Thripp's hand hovered awkwardly above her dainty hat and then gently fumbled as if to stroke her hair beneath. He knelt down beside her chair.

For heaven's sake! for heaven's sake! for heaven's sake! a secret voice was gabbling frenziedly in his ear. "Tell your old dad, lovey," he murmured out loud, softly as the crooning of a wood-pigeon.

Millie tilted back her pretty hat and dropped her fair head on his shoulder. "It's nothing, dad," she said. "It's only that they are all the same."

"What are all the same?"

"Oh, fellows, dad."

"Which one, precious?" Mr. Thripp lulled wooingly. God strike him dead! muttered his monster.

"Oh, only young Arthur. Like a fool I waited half an hour for him and then saw him with—with that Westcliff girl."

A sigh as voluminous as the suspiration of Niagara swept over Mr. Thripp; but it made no sound. Half a dozen

miraculous words of reassurance were storming his mind in a frenzy of relief. He paused an instant, and accepted the seventh.

"What's all that, my precious?" he was murmuring. "Why, when I was courting your mother, I saw just the same thing happen. She was a mighty pretty young thing, too, as a girl, though not quite so trim and neat in the figure as you. I felt I could throttle him where he stood. But no, I just took no notice, trusting in my own charms!"

"That's all very well," sobbed Millie, "but you were a man, and *we* have to fight without seeming to. Not that I care a fig for him: he can go. But——"

"Lord, Millie!" Mr. Thripp, interrupted, smoothing her cheek with his squat forefinger, "you'd beat twenty of them Westcliffs, with a cast in both eyes and your hands behind your back. Don't you grieve no more, my dear; he'll come back safe and sound, or he's less of a—of a nice young feller than I take him for."

For a moment Mr. Thripp caught a glimpse of the detestable creature with the goggling eyes and the suède shoes, but he dismissed him sternly from view.

"There now," he said, "give your poor old dad a kiss. What's disappointments, Millie; they soon pass away. And now, just take a sip or two of this extra-strong Bohay! I was hoping I shouldn't have to put up with a lonely cup and not a soul to keep me company. But mind, my precious, not a word to your ma."

So there they sate, father and daughter, comforter and comforted, while Mr. Thripp worked miracles for two out of a teapot for one. And while Millie, with heart comforted, was musing on that other young fellow she had

noticed boldly watching her while she was waiting for her Arthur, Mr. Thripp was wondering when it would be safe and discreet to disturb her solacing daydream so that he might be busying himself over the supper.

It's one dam neck-and-neck worry and trouble after another, his voice was assuring him. But meanwhile, his plain square face was serene and gentle as a nestful of halcyons, as he sat sipping his hot water and patting his pensive Millie's hand.

THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY [1]

by Charles Caldwell Dobie

Within a hundred yards of the hill's crest Walton Pringle's pocket flash winked spasmodically and died. He paused a moment to catch his breath; the pull up from the creek bed had winded him and the sting of cold rain in his face added a further discomfort. If he hadn't dawdled at Preston's Flat, hoping for the rain to cease or abate, he would have made his objective before nightfall. But since he had elected to wait so long it would have been much better to continue there until next morning. As it was, he felt sure that he had strayed from the trail—a particularly unhappy thought to a man who could claim only a speaking acquaintance with the wilderness. And this too under the pall of a stormy night without the slightest ray of light to guide him. Well, the best he could do was to stumble on: it was far better to keep moving in circles than to resign himself to inactivity and chills.

He was glad now that he had been persuaded to take a pistol when he came away from Walden's Glen. If he were lost, at least he could provide himself with game, and in the mountains one could never tell how long one might wander aimlessly along false paths once the proper trail was aban-

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doned. At first this pistol business had seemed absurd: California was no longer a bandit country, and even if it were he had nothing worth stealing. A jack-knife, a pocket flash, two bars of chocolate, and a sheaf of notes on "Itinerant and Rural Labor and Its Relation to Crime" were poor pickings for a hold-up man. His notes especially were valueless to any one save himself, and even their loss would not have been irreparable. He was still near enough to his investigations to have the material for his book clearly fixed in his mind and, once back at his desk in San Francisco, he would be able to recall every detail of the last two weeks spent among the economic nomads of the mountains. But in spite of all these obvious guarantees against violence, it appeared that there *were* reasons for being forearmed. . . . It was Lem Thatcher, one of the oldtimers, who had put him straight on this point.

"Bandits be damned!" Thatcher had exclaimed. "But how about a stray bobcat? Or a crazy man? Or a lost trail? . . . A man who goes into the open with nuthin' but a jack-knife and a couple o' bars o' chocolate is a fool. . . . Give a man a gun and you give him the next thing to a pardner."

Under the depression of the moment he felt that his original stupidity lay not so much in failing to realize the needs of such a trip as in essaying the venture at all. Why hadn't he been sensible and taken the stage as far as Rock Point and swung on from there to Marchel Duplin's cabin? He had no time to waste, and had there been no other reason this alternative would have given him several additional hours with a man who, everybody conceded, knew more about sheep herding than any other within a hundred miles. He had talked

to a Basque shepherd near Compton's and to a Mexican herder just the other side of Willow Creek, attempting to get sidelights on their profession, but they had been taciturn and he without the proper moisture for limbering their tongues. Duplin, everybody conceded, was exceptionally garrulous for a sheep herder even when he had not the help of thin wine. It seemed expedient, then, to go to Duplin if he wished properly to complete the picture of rural economy whose drawing he contemplated. But for an untrained mountaineer—a tenderfoot, in fact—it was nothing save a whimsical extravagance to plunge along a fifteen-mile trail through forest and shifting granite when an easier course was open. Being valley bred he hadn't expected rain in August, but if he had stopped to think he might have known that anything was climatically possible in the mountains.

Cursing, crawling, cursing, somehow in spite of the blackness he felt himself making progress uphill. Presently his feet touched level ground. This in itself was reassuring. He raised his eyes in a desperate effort to pierce the gloom, took a few steps forward—and suddenly, miraculously, found himself in a clearing from which beckoned the friendly light of a cabin. With a smothered exclamation of joy he quickened his gait, almost running forward, and the next instant he had gained the window, instinctively stopping to peer within.

The unreality of the scene which met his eye gave Walton Pringle a feeling that he was either dreaming or gazing down on a stage set for a play; only sleep or the theater seemed capable of a picture so filled with melodrama. But in the theater one was never at once spectator and participant, and in sleep one did not have the tangible physical discomfort

which he felt. He drew his rain-soaked body closer against the cabin, raising himself on his toes so that he might get a better view of the interior. A man stood hovering over a table lighted by an anæmic candle, and through his fingers dripped a slow trickle of silver. In a corner, uncannily outlined by a steady gleam of light, was a crucifix nailed to the wall and below it lay a couch piled with disordered bed clothing. On the floor, midway between table and couch, was sprawled the figure of a man—arms flung wide, his black-bearded face upturned—a startling inanimate thing that made Walton Pringle turn away with a shudder. The man at the table undoubtedly was a thief. Was he also a murderer?

For a second time that night Pringle was glad that he was provided with a pistol, and yet in spite of his preparedness he had a momentary misgiving, an indecision: to be secured against an unavoidable contingency was one thing; to push deliberately into trouble was quite another. Pringle was no coward, but he knew his limitations; he was not trained in any superlative skill with firearms. Was it discreet, then, to thrust oneself across the path of a desperate man?

He continued to gaze through the window with morbid fascination and uncertainty: the picture was too revealing—violence had been done, that was obvious; plunder was in process of accomplishment. A sudden disgust at his weak-kneed prudence stiffened his decision. At that moment the wind, flinging itself through the pine trees, sent a shower of twigs upon the cabin roof. The face at the table was lifted with a tragic sense of insecurity and fear; Pringle saw that it was the face of a young man, almost a boy. For a brief moment their eyes met; then without further ado Pringle crept swiftly to the door, hurling his body against it in anticipation

of barred progress. The force of the impact carried him well into the room. The youth was on his feet and an exclamation halted on his thin, pallid lips. Pringle whipped out his gun.

Walton Pringle did not utter a word; he merely gazed questioningly at the youth, who began to whine.

"I didn't do nuthin', honest I didn't. . . . I hope to die if—"

Pringle cut him short with an imperious gesture. The lad's manner as well as his physique was filled with a shambling, retarded maturity. His face was curiously pale for one from a rural environment, and his hair that should have been vivid and red had been sunburnt to a vague straw color.

"Hand over your gun!" Pringle demanded.

The youth straightened himself with a flicker of confidence. "I ain't got none!" he threw back.

Pringle searched him: he had told the truth. "Come then, give me a hand here!" he commanded, laying his own weapon on the table.

Together they lifted the inert body from the floor and placed it on the couch.

"He's dead!" the youth ventured.

Pringle put his hand to the man's heart. "So it seems," he returned dryly.

The dead man was swarthy and beetle browed, with wiry blue-black hair and beard. He was undressed save for a suit of thick woolen underwear and his feet were encased in heavy knitted gray socks. An ugly gash clotted his brow and the ooze of blood trickling thickly from the wound was staining the bedclothes. A flash of intuition lighted up Pringle's mental gropings.

"Is this Marchel Duplin's cabin?"

The youth stared, then nodded.

"And is this Marchel Duplin?"

"Yes."

Almost with the same movement Pringle and the youth turned away, the lad dropping into a chair before the table.

Pringle drew a bench from the wall and straddled it. "What's your name?" he demanded.

"Sam—Sam Allen."

"Where do you come from?"

"Down—down by Walden's Glen."

"Ah! . . . And what are you doing here?"

"Gettin' out o' the wet, mostly."

Pringle pointed to the heap of coins on the table. "And making a little clean-up on the side, eh? . . . Well, what have you got to say for yourself?"

Sam Allen dropped his ineffectual blue eyes. "Nuthin' much. . . . I come here to get outa the rain, like I said before. He was layin' on the bed there, mutterin' to hisself, and burning up with fever. I went up to him and I says, 'Marchel, don't yer know me?' With that he grabs me by the throat. I never *did* see anybody get such a stranglehold on a man. . . . I jest couldn't pry him loose. He went down like a chunk o' lead. And when his head struck the ground"—Sam Allen shuddered—"it was jest like a rotten watermelon went squash. . . . I didn't dare look fer a minute, and when I did he was dead!"

"And then you proceeded to rob him, eh? Without even waiting to lift his dead body from the floor . . . or seeing what you could to help him?"

Sam Allen shook his head. "I know when a man's dead

. . . and I don't like to touch 'em, somehow—that is—not all by myself. It was different when you come. Besides, I've heard tell that the law likes things left in a case like this—that it's better not to touch nuthin'."

Pringle could not forego a sneer; really, the youth was too ineffectual! "Nothing except money, I suppose!"

Sam Allen ignored the sarcasm; it is doubtful if it really made an impression. "It musta got kicked out from under his pillow in the scuffle. . . . Anyway, I seen it layin' there on the floor, jest where his head struck, almost. Of course I was curious." He turned a childishly eager face toward Pringle. "Do you know, he had nigh onto fifty dollars in that there bag."

"Indeed!"

But again Pringle's sarcasm rebounded and fell flat. Apparently Sam Allen was not quick witted. He mistook irony for interest. Without further urging the youth began to tell about himself. His father had a hog ranch just this side of Walden's Glen—a drab, filthy spot. This father kept drunk most of the time on a potent brand of moonshine which he himself distilled. The whole drudgery of the place had fallen on the boy. "Cows, I wouldn't have minded so much—they ain't dirty like pigs—leastways what they eat ain't!" He breathed hard when he spoke and his clipped words took on descriptive vehemence. The whole atmosphere of the Allen ranch rose in a fetid mist before Walton Pringle: hog wallow, sour swill, obscene grunts and squealings, the beastly drunkenness of Allen senior. Since no mention was made of a woman's presence, Pringle divined that there was none. Sam Allen had grown sick to death of it all and had run away: without money, provisions, or proper clothing—even

lacking decent footgear—without plans. It was a pitiful story and yet it damned him superlatively; gave point to the situation in which he had been found. Listening to him Pringle lost the conviction that he was a premeditated murderer, but there seemed no reasonable doubt that he was an accidental one. It seemed he knew well the Duplin cabin; used to steal up there on rare occasions, when Marchel was out shepherding, to share the Frenchman's dribbles of thin wine. He liked wine. One mouthful and your heart felt freer, more gay. Why, one could sing then—almost. At least Marchel Duplin could. Moonshine never gave a man a singing mood—only a nasty one. At this point Pringle could not forego a question: Did he know that Duplin had money? . . . Allen hesitated and Pringle had an impulse to warn him against answering; it didn't seem fair to let the boy unwittingly incriminate himself. But before Pringle could caution him the youth blurted out the truth: he had heard something of it. Pringle felt his heart contract in a rush of pity: the whole situation was so obvious—a desperate, weak, perhaps degenerate boy rushing blindly toward freedom and disaster. Had Duplin's wine jug been part of the youth's hapless plan? Had he attempted to get the shepherd drunk before he despoiled him?

At all events he hadn't managed skillfully and the Frenchman had put up a fight. The results spoke for themselves. Well, it all came back to heredity and environment. He'd have an interesting lot of notes to make on this case. No theorizing this time, but something at first hand, alive and palpitating. Quite suddenly he found his pity receding, submerged by his scientific desire for truth. The youth before him was like a moth pinned to the wall, before which the

investigator lost all senstimental interest in his eagerness to measure the duration of the death agony. Now was the time to get data, before fear or caution stepped in to dam up Sam Allen's naïve garrulity. Pringle was interested in the youth's mother. But Sam Allen couldn't remember much: Lizzie Evans, that had been her name—a girl who "worked out." Yet the very economy of this picture was illuminating. Lizzie Evans, a girl who "worked out." It was perfect! A girl who doubtless had been ruined, to use the phrase of unemancipated women. She probably had had just such a pinched, yellow, wistful face as the son she had borne to feed the hangman's noose. Pringle had a fad for reconstructing the faces of mothers from the bolder outlines of their male offspring. He usually found the test successful even with the most rugged material; he had a feeling that in this case his imagination did not need to overleap any confines whatsoever to achieve its goal. Lizzie Allen, born Evans, had died: a futile, weak anæmic slip of a girl, stifled by the nauseous vapors of the hog pens. Not that Sam Allen put it so, but Pringle could read a shorthand of life almost as skillfully as a complete script. He swung the conversation back to Allen senior. The son embellished the portrait with a wealth of sinister details, finishing with a malicious little chuckle.

"An' he's deputy sheriff for the district, too, moonshinin' an' all. . . . Oh, I've seen him track fellars down an' shoot 'em when they had the goods on him. Didn't matter whether they was guilty or not. . . . I've seen him beat 'em, too—over the head—with the butt of a pistol—or anything else that came handy!"

Pringle turned his eyes to the inanimate figure on the bed. How completely everything was dovetailing! "*I've seen him*

beat 'em, too, over the head." Precisely. For all the youth's inadequacy he had absorbed some of the inhumanities from his sire.

A strange exalted cruelty began to stir in Walton Pringle, the cruelty of an animal on the scene of some furtive thing pitifully intent on escape. His mood must have communicated itself, for suddenly Sam Allen fell into a silence that no amount of prodding could shatter. Well, there could be little more that bore upon the particular issue. Pringle began to think of the most expedient move. He found himself shivering. Naturally, since he had been wet to the skin. . . . A rusty stove huddled itself just below one of the windows, sending its pipe crazily through a shattered pane. Pringle suggested a fire. Dumbly the youth assented. Together they began to collect débris from the cabin floor: crumpled newspapers, empty cartons, a handful of pine cones. Soon a cheerful blaze crackled and roared. Even Sam Allen found its warmth agreeable, but its cheer did not serve to melt his sudden reticence.

Presently for lack of fuel the fire began to spend itself and its snap and roar sank to a faint hiss. The night too seemed to have grown miraculously silent. Pringle rose and threw open the cabin door. The rain had stopped, even the wind had fallen, and through a rent in the storm clouds far to the east a faint glow gave promise of a rising moon.

Pringle closed the door and went back to his place before the stove. The situation in which he found himself made him suddenly restive. It seemed as if he could not possibly wait until morning to settle the issue that must ultimately be settled.

Walden's Glen lay a good fifteen miles to the east, but at least it was for the most part down grade. His exhaustion of the previous hour had been swallowed up in the absorbing shock of drama. He felt like making a decisive move and yet a certain pity for Sam Allen, shrinking visibly before his questioning gaze, made him resolve to give the youth a meager choice in the matter. He sauntered casually to the table. The candle was guttering to a feeble decline, and it threw out a flickering light that touched with spasmodic fire the coins lying in a disorderly heap where Sam Allen had abandoned them. Pringle ran his hand nervously through the silver pile.

"What do you think," he asked abruptly, "shall we strike out for Walden's Glen now, or wait till morning?"

Sam Allen gave a gasp. Then recovering himself, he returned with slow drawling defiance, "If you're headed that way, suit yourself. . . . But I set out to leave Walden's Glen and I don't see no reason why I should go back."

Pringle felt himself grow ominously cool. "I dare say you don't. But, unfortunately for you, there *are* reasons. . . . In a way I'm sorry I walked into this mess. But I did walk in and I can't shirk my responsibility. There's the law to reckon with, you know!"

Sam Allen's lips began to tremble. "I tell you it was an accident. Don't you believe me?"

"No."

"And you mean to give me up—to—to—my father?"

Deputy sheriff for the district! For a moment even Pringle trembled: the picture which the youth had drawn of his sire had been too vivid. And besides, the bare situation was pregnant with disaster.

"I'm afraid there's no help for it," Pringle returned, trying to check any show of emotion. Sam Allen crept nearer to the table like a whipped dog. Pringle was stirred to a profound pity. "Besides," he went on more softly, "your father can't really touch you. You'll have all the law on your side."

Even in his terror the youth could not check a sneer. "Much you know about it!" he cried passionately.

"But I'll go with you—don't you understand—every step of the way. . . . I mean, I'll stand by you till everything's put straight." Pringle broke off suddenly. Sam Allen's white face seemed to draw closer to the table and his two eyes were fixed craftily upon the gun which Pringle had neglected to restore to his hip pocket.

An intense nervous silence followed; Pringle made a swift movement toward the pistol, and the next moment the candle was violently extinguished.

Pringle stood momentarily inactive under the shock of surprise. The slam of the door roused him. He went stumbling through the gloom, knocking down impediments in his path until he gained the open. The moon was still hidden by the thick clouds in the east, but directly overhead a few stars showed dimly through thin vapors rising from the drenched hills.

Almost at once he realized the futility of pursuit. He knew nothing about the country, and besides, the greatest service he could render was to report the situation promptly. An aroused community would deal effectively with the murderer—he wouldn't get very far with his lack of resources and wit.

Pringle went back into the cabin and lighted the candle, forcing the stub out of the candlestick to prolong its life. The pile of silver had been scattered about by the impact of stumbling fingers but it appeared otherwise intact; the pistol however, had disappeared. Pringle laughed to himself, shrugging his shoulders. It was plain that he had much to learn about the custody of prisoners. Urged by the expediency of taking stock of all emphatic details connected with the situation, he raised the candle and swept the interior with its faint radiance. This was the first comprehensive view he had taken of the room. But there was really little of fresh significance: the cot on which lay the body of Marchel Duplin, the rusting stove, the table, the one chair, the bench; and over in a corner—back of the door when it swung open—a burlap curtain screening a shallow triangle. This last item was the only detail which had previously escaped him, partly because of its neutral color and partly because it hung in the shadow. A faint suspicion crossed him as he caught the movement of the curtain. He put the light down on the table. Could it be that the slammed door following on Allen's apparent exit had been a clever ruse? He took a quick gliding step forward and thrust the curtain dramatically aside, almost expecting to find Sam Allen cowering behind it. But the space revealed nothing except a muddle of clothes and discarded boots, and a sharp current of air drifting through a wide crevice in the floor.

The reaction from the tenseness of expectation left him shivering. An impatience for the whole situation swept over him. He felt relieved that young Allen had fled, eluded him. It lifted an unpleasant duty from his shoulders and at the same time confirmed the youth's guilt. He would have

hated, now that he considered it, to be the instrument for turning an uncertain situation into an inevitable one. His testimony might have damned an innocent man—that he was now willing to concede. But Allen's escape immeasurably cleared the issue: innocent people were never fearful. How many, *many* times, in divers forms, had this truism been brought home to him!

Yet in spite of the emphatic case against young Allen, Pringle felt the necessity of having his own movements clear in his mind. He'd be questioned, naturally; that went without saying. Quite rapidly he recapitulated the events of the day: the start from Walden's Glen at sunrise, the untoward rain at noon, his dawdling in the shelter of a redwood hollow against a sudden clearing; his resolve to push on when he saw no prospect of the storm's abatement. . . . It all sounded so clear and simple. Once he explained his mission, any testimony he might give must gather added weight. And his credentials would render his testimony doubly valuable. His book on *Radical Movements in Relation to Post-war Problems* would carry him past any reasonable skepticism, and then a B.A. from Yale and the prospects of a Ph.D. from Columbia ought to impress even a rural magistrate.

He decided to count the money and take it with him to Walden's Glen. It wasn't safe to leave it in the cabin, and besides, it had a significant bearing on the case. In a half hour, he figured, the moon would be fully risen and if the sky continued to clear he would have a brilliantly lighted path to travel back.

He drew the single chair up to the table and fell to his task. The money was in all denominations of silver, but mostly quarters and halves. He began to group them into systematic

piles. A faint scraping sound made him pause. . . . A twig, probably, brushing against the house. . . . He continued counting the money. Again the sound came. This time a tremor ran through him as he stopped his task. He kept his eye straight ahead as if fearing to turn to the right or left. Then slowly, fearfully, with the inevitability of one who feels other eyes fixed ironically upon him, he turned and looked up at the window, very much as Sam Allen had done less than an hour before. . . . A man's face answered his startled gaze and the next instant the door flew open.

Walton Pringle rose in his seat, again repeating the gesture of Sam Allen in a like situation. A faint, almost imperceptible sense of this analogy crept over him; he felt his heart suddenly contract.

The man in the doorway had an impressive bulk, a swaggering, insolent grossness that must once have been robustly virile. His coarse underlip had sufficient force to crowd upward a ragged mustache, and as he stepped heavily into the circle of light, Walton Pringle felt a glint of sardonic and unpropritiable humor leap at him from two piglike eyes.

"Where's Duplin?" the stranger demanded.

Pringle pointed to the cot. The visitor strode up to it and drew down the quilt. "Dead, eh!" He bent over closer. "Ah, a tolerable blow on the head. . . . Neat job, I'd say." He flung back the quilt over the face of the corpse with a gesture that showed an absolute indifference, a contempt even for the presence of death. "Well, stranger, suppose you tell me who you are?" There was an authority in his drawling suaveness which brought a quick answer. "Pringle, eh?". . . And just what are you doing here?"

Pringle stiffened with a rallied dignity. "I might ask you the same question. And I might ask your name, too, if I felt at all curious. As a matter of fact, I'm not, but I must decline to be cross-examined by a man I don't know."

A grim humor played about the protruding under-lip. "Correct, stranger, correct as hell! My name happens to be Allen—Hank Allen. That don't mean nuthin' to yer, does it? Well, I'll go further. I'm deputy sheriff for this county and I've got a right to question any man I take a notion to question. It ain't exactly a right I work overtime, but when I come into a man's cabin and find that man dead and a stranger pawin' over his money, I guess I just naturally calc'late that I'd better get on the job." He threw a pair of handcuffs on the table. "Why I happen to be here don't matter much, I guess. A man sometimes goes hunting for jack rabbit and brings home venison. You get me, don't yer?"

Walton Pringle stood motionless, trying to still the beating of his heart. He understood something now of Sam Allen's terror, Sam Allen's fear of being turned over to his father. But he knew also that a betrayal of fear would be one of the worst moves he could make.

"You don't have to tell me why you're here," he said quietly, "now that I know your name. There's a runaway lad mixed up in it somewhere, if I'm not mistaken."

The barest possible flash of surprise lighted up the features of Hank Allen, destroying for a moment their brutal immobility. "I ain't saying 'yes' or 'no' to that," he half laughed, recovering his careless manner. "But I don't figger how that answers the question at hand."

Pringle smiled a superior smile. "Perhaps you're not the

only one to look through the window at a stranger sitting before this table *pawin'* over a dead man's money. Perhaps I wasn't the first in the field. Perhaps there is more than you fancy to connect up a runaway lad with the question at hand. Who knows?"

Hank Allen's shoulders drooped forward with almost impalpable menace and his brows drew down tightly. "Look here, Pringle, I ain't accustomed to movin' in circles. When I shoot, I shoot straight. What's more, I usually set the pace. In other words, let's have no more riddles. Good plain language suits me. What's on your mind?"

Pringle shrugged his shoulders with a hint of triumph and proceeded to tell his adversary just what was on his mind in good plain language that he felt would suit Hank Allen down to the ground. But as he progressed he found an uneasiness halting the glibness with which he had opened fire: Hank Allen's impassivity became as inscrutable and sinister as a tragic mask whose inflexible outlines concealed a surface animate with fly-blown depravity. He finished upon a note of pity for the youth and rested his case with a tremulousness of spirit which disclosed that he was pleading his cause rather than Sam Allen's; and pleading, as Sam Allen himself had done, to a tribunal that had already reached its verdict.

"I'm not saying the boy meant to do it, mind you," he repeated, stung to a reiteration by Allen's ominous silence. "And I'm right here to do all I can to pull him out of a hole. *My* testimony ought to have some weight."

Hank Allen ignored Pringle's egotistic flourish. "Let's see," he mused coldly, "what time did you strike out from Walden's Glen?"

"At seven this morning."

"And it took you until nearly nine at night to make this cabin? . . . You're a mighty slow walker, if you ask me."

"The rain came on shortly after one o'clock. I thought it might let up, so I dodged into the shelter of a redwood stump near Preston's Flat. But it only grew worse. At five I decided to push on."

Suddenly Pringle stopped, chilled by the fact that Hank Allen's air of sneering incredulity was rendering devoid of substance the simplest and most truthful statements. Even in his own ears they rang out falsely. He desperately recovered himself and again took up his defense. It was terrifying how hollow even his credentials sounded, let alone the story of the day's events: a Yale B.A., a Ph.D. from Columbia, the author of *Radical Movements in Relation to Post-War Problems*—every statement he made grew more incredible, more fictitious, more hopeless. It was as if the monumental skepticism of Hank Allen were capable of destroying all reality. When he had finished, Hank Allen cleared his throat significantly.

"You'll have a mighty interesting story to tell the judge," he half-sneered, half-chuckled.

The brevity of Hank Allen's comment was packed with presage, and yet for a fleeting moment Walton Pringle took courage. A judge—precisely! A judge would be quite a different matter. Really, the situation was little short of absurd! In answer Hank Allen merely turned his gaze toward the disheveled cot, and he continued to tap the table significantly with the empty handcuffs.

In the portentous silence which followed Walton Pringle's thoughts leaped to Sam Allen. Had his own skepticism of

the previous hour also flattened the youth's defense? If he had listened with an open mind would the boy's far-fetched statements have held germs of reasonibility? After all, what was there so extravagant in Sam Allen's tale? It could have happened just as he had said. But there was the youth's absurd escape. What point did any man have in damning himself with any move so suspicious—so futile?

As for Allen senior, what did he really think? It was almost incredible to imagine that he fancied Walton Pringle guilty. Then why the pose? Did some smoldering clan spirit in him rouse instinctively to his own flesh and blood in its extremity? Or would his son's disgrace expose his own delinquencies? The story that Pringle had listened to must merely have scratched the surface of his father's infamies. No, it was patent that Allen senior was in no position to invite the law to review his private record. . . . Yet he must know that he could but postpone the inevitable. What would happen tomorrow when the proper magistrate heard the real truth? The thought, spinning through Walton Pringle's brain, gave him a sudden feeling of boldness. After all, what had *he* to fear? He rose in his seat, all his confidence recaptured.

"Mr. Allen," he said clearly, "you are quite right. I *have* an interesting story to tell the judge. Therefore, I think the sooner I tell it the better. Shall we start back to Walden's Glen at once?"

A sardonic smile fastened itself on Pringle. He picked up the handcuffs. "If you will oblige me—" he nodded toward Pringle's folded arms.

The faint suggestion of a chill crept over Pringle. "Do I

understand, Mr. Allen, that you intend to put me to the indignity of handcuffs?" Allen shrugged. "No, I won't have it! I'll be damned if I will!".

"You won't have it? Come now, that ain't pretty talk. And it ain't reasonable talk, neither." He narrowed his eyes. "Resisting an officer of the law is sometimes a messy job, stranger."

Pringle's resistance died before the covert snarl in Allen's voice. He put out his wrists and in the next instant he felt a cold clasp of steel encircling them and heard the click of the lock. At the moment he remembered the words of Sam Allen: *"I've seen him beat 'em, too, over the head, with the butt end of a pistol—or anything else that came handy."*

And in a swift, terrible moment of revelation he knew that that was just what Hank Allen intended to do.

He fell back on the bench utterly helpless and without defense. Every story of the law's brutality that had ever reached his ears seemed to beat mockingly about him. He remembered now that not one of these tales had ever concerned an unshackled victim. No, what petty tyrants liked best was something prostrate which they could kick and trample with impunity. That was always the normal complement of bullying, but in this case corruption gave the hand of authority an added incentive. Hank Allen would murder him not only for the pleasure of the performance but to save his own hide. A man struck down for resisting an officer would tell no tales. And how neatly the situation would be cleared up: a suspected murderer paying the penalty of his crime without process or expense of law. A bit of sound judicial

economy, to tell the truth, in a community not given to rating life too dearly. And he thought that he had managed it all so cleverly!

At this point he noticed that Hank Allen was intent on investigating a menacing six-shooter and his mind moved alertly past all the futile movements he could make toward defense. Where was Hank Allen planning his latest atrocity—here in Marchel Duplin's cabin or somewhere on the trail to Walden's Glen? Here in the cabin—or he missed his guess—with a litter of broken furniture to add confirmation to a tale of resistance.

His gaze swept the room with a sudden hunger for even a drab background to life, as if his soul longed to carry a homely memory with it into the impending darkness. He saw the tumbled cot, the rusting stove, the table before him with a sudden passionate sense of their rude symbolism. Even the guttering candle, almost spent, took on significance. It was the candle, blown into untimely darkness, that had paved the way for his predicament. If only his pocket flash had worked! Upon such trivialities did life itself depend! A flickering candle . . . a flickering candle . . . a flickering—The rhythmic beat of this reiteration snapped. Unconsciously he had looked past the gleam of light to the closed door and the burlap curtain, screening its shallow triangle, swaying gently in the half darkness. Abruptly candlelight, doorway, and curtain became fused into a unit—startling and lucid. Would it be possible? The prospect left him as breathless as a dash of cold water; he could hear himself gasp. Hank Allen fixed him with a suspicious glance.

"What's the matter?" he demanded brutally.

Pringle's mind cleared to a point of supreme intuition.

"I'm—I'm ill!" he gasped. "Would—would you mind opening the door—it's suffocating in here."

Hank Allen hesitated, then a diabolic humor seemed to move him to compliance. He threw back the door with a chuckle and resumed his seat. It was as if he had said, "Try it, my friend, if it amuses you!"

For a brief moment Walton Pringle closed his eyes; then quite suddenly opened them, took in a deep breath, and with a quick upward leap he blew out the candle.

Drawing himself flatly against the wall, Pringle felt the impact of the door swinging back before Allen's stumbling pursuit. It was inconceivable that a man on such good terms with subterfuge could have been tricked by anything so obvious as a slammed door. But how long would he remain tricked? He wouldn't search the hills all night, nor would he be likely to strike out for Walden's Glen without returning to the cabin. Pringle's first elation at the extraordinary success of his ruse fell before the realization of his plight. What chance had a handcuffed man in any case? And his attempt to escape—how beautifully that colored his guilt! *Innocent people were never fearful.* The memory of this mental deduction bit at him sharply. Yet with all the odds against him he felt that he must plan something and that quickly. Cautiously moving back the open door he peered over its rim. At first his vision could not pierce the gloom, but suddenly a flood of moonlight released from the imprisonment of dispersing clouds made a path of silver into the cabin. Pringle listened: everything was extraordinarily still.

All at once the silence was cracked by a keen report. A snapping fusillade answered Pringle's mental interrogation.

. . . He heard a shrill cry, clipped and terrible. The silence fell again. . . . Presently the soft beat of cautious footfalls drifted toward the cabin. Pringle withdrew to the curtain's shelter. Something fluttered on the threshold. Then slowly, warily, the door was closed.

Pringle leaned sidewise, the tail of one eye thrust past the curtain's edge. Moonlight was flooding now even through the grimy windowpane. A shadowy form crept stealthily toward the table, halted as if sensing a living presence, turned sharply and revealed the unmistakable outlines of Sam Allen's ineffectual face.

Walton Pringle gave a cry of mingled relief and surprise and stepped from his hiding place.

The youth shrank back. "I—I wondered where you were," he gasped. He gave a little hysterical flourish with his right hand and Pringle saw that he held the stolen pistol. "Well, I'm a murderer *now!*" he spit out with quivering venom.

In a flash Pringle knew everything, and yet he could only stammer out in stupid conventional protest:

"You don't mean . . . *not your father!*"

The youth's face grew ashen. "Who else did you think?" He gave a scraping laugh. "Would *you* stand up and let him get you, if you had a chance to shoot first? I guess not. . . . Well, what are you going to do about it?"

Pringle brought his shackled wrists into the moonlight. "Damned little, I fancy."

Young Allen put an incredulous finger on the handcuffs. "What's the idea?"

Pringle smiled ironically. "Just a little joke of your

father's. He pretended he thought I was the murderer. He was for taking me back to Walden's Glen." He stopped, overcome with a passion for self-accusation, self-abasement: "Just as I wanted to take you back. . . . Yes, on the surface he was as self-righteous and smug as I was. But he didn't fool me. I knew that he intended to murder me in cold blood—to save your hide and incidentally his. . . . Well, I blew out the candle as you did—to—to save myself."

A curious look came over Sam Allen's face. Walton Pringle had a feeling that for the second time that night he had delivered himself into the hands of the enemy.

"You were a fool to tell me that," Sam Allen drawled, with a hint of his father's biting irony in his voice. "I wouldn't have thought of such an easy way out—all by myself. . . . Yer know what I mean, don't yer?"

Pringle felt himself grow unnaturally calm. "You mean you could shoot me down and settle everything for yourself? . . . Yes, you could. Dead men tell no tales, and in this case three dead men would be even more silent than two. . . . I can't say that I blame you. I didn't give any quarter in your pinch; why should you spare me?"

Sam Allen gave an impatient cough and his words vibrated with sudden and strange maturity as he said coldly:

"I'm trying to figure it out. . . . It *would* be simpler to kill you." He held up the pistol, gazing at it with the tragic fascination of a stripling who has tasted his first victory—drawn his first blood. His whole body seemed animated with some strange new power that still struggled for foothold. Was the spirit of Hank Allen so soon fighting for a place in which to lodge its sinister corruption? . . . Suddenly he be-

gan to shiver violently. "No, it wouldn't be simpler," he half whispered—"not in the long run. . . . What do you say? Shall we go back to Walden's Glen together?"

A faint blur dimmed Pringle's gaze. "I don't deserve it!" he cried with a vehement passion. "Upon my word, I don't!"

Sam Allen laid the pistol on the table. "Shucks!" he said simply, "everybody makes mistakes."

And at that moment Walton Pringle fancied that the pinched, yellow, wistful face before him re-created with a curiously poignant glory the face of Lizzie Allen, born Evans —the girl who had "worked out"!

THE LEOPARD OF THE SEA [1]

by H. G. Dwight

Power over the waters hath Allah given to the unbeliever, but over the land to the faithful.

—Turkish Proverb.

After it was quite dark, a man who strolled by happened to catch sight of my camera. He stopped and began to examine it. I discreetly lit a cigarette in order to show him that the camera had a proprietor. He continued his inspection, as much as to show me that he had known I was there. Then he took out his tobacco box, rolled a cigarette with deliberation, came up to me, saluted me politely, and lighted his cigarette from mine. It is the custom of the country, you know. Nobody has any matches. I suppose somebody did once, but since then everybody has gone on taking the sacred fire from everybody else.

Having made the second salutation of usage, the stranger showed no haste to be off. Indeed, after standing a moment, he sat down on another stone near me—not so near as the Greek had done. From that, and from his silence, and from a certain easy awkwardness about him, I guessed he was a Turk.

"Do you make postcards?" he asked at last.

1 From *Stamboul Nights,* copyright, 1922, by Doubleday, Page & Co. By permission of the author and the publishers.

"No," I said, "I am just taking a picture."

"Ah, you have a whim."

"Yes," I assented, "I have a whim." And I smiled to myself in the dark at the pleasant idiom.

"Why do you take pictures now, when it is dark?" pursued my companion. "There is a very pretty view from here in the daytime, but can your machine see it at night?"

I did not mind his inquisitiveness. There was nothing eager or insistent about it. It was simple and natural, and there was a quality in it that I often feel in the Turks, of being able to take the preliminaries of life for granted. The man was evidently not of the higher classes, but neither was he of the lowest. I could make out that he wore European clothes and no collar.

"I want to get the lights of Ramazan," I explained to him. "I took one picture at sunset, so as to get the shape of Yeni Jami and the way the Golden Horn lies behind it, and afterward I shall take another on the same plate, for the lights."

"Ah!" he uttered, as if perfectly comprehending my whim. And after a pause he added: "They must make a great feast at Yeni Jami to-night. They have not lighted one lamp yet."

It was true. The minarets of St. Sophia, the Süleïmanieh, all the other great mosques that ride the crest of Stamboul, already wore their necklaces of gold beads, while mysterious pendants began to twinkle between them. We watched one spark after another spell "O Mohammed!" above the dome of St. Sophia, and a golden flower grew out of the dark between the minarets of Baïezid.

"Do you come from far?" suddenly asked my companion.

"Yes," I said, "from America."

"From America," he repeated. I could see by his tone that

the name did not suggest very much to him. "I have been to many countries, but I have not been to America. How many days does it take to go?"

"Eh," I replied, "if you pay very much and go half the way by train you can do it in eight or nine days. If you go all the way by steamer it takes about three weeks."

"Then it is not so far as Yemen," remarked my companion.

"Oh, have you been to Yemen?" I asked in return. "I have been to many countries too, but I have never been to Yemen."

"I never would have gone if I had known. But now they go most of the way by train."

"Didn't you like the sea?" I ventured.

"Fire is for the brazier and water is for the cup," returned my companion somewhat enigmatically.

A flicker came out against one of the dark lances of Yeni Jami, and then three small lamps—which were glass cups of oil with a floating wick—dropped into place one above another. Presently three more appeared beside them, and three more, until the lower gallery of the minaret was set off with its triple circlet of light. There was an interval, during which one could imagine a turbaned person picking his way up a corkscrew stair of stone, and the second gallery put on a similar ornament. I was wondering whether the turbaned person would have to climb all the way down to the ground and up into the other minaret, when lights began to flicker there too. But what I really wondered was what my companion meant by his odd proverb.

"Have you been much on the sea?" I asked, hoping to find out.

"Eh, my father was a stoker on the *Leopard of the Sea,* and

when I was thirteen or fourteen I went on board too. The captain took a fancy to me, and when I grew up they made me a lieutenant. But we only went outside once: that time we went to Yemen."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, beginning to be interested in my man and resolving to seize him by the leg if he got up from his stone. "What sort of a ship was the *Leopard of the Sea?*"

"Didn't you ever hear of her?" he asked in surprise. I didn't answer and he went on: "She was not a battleship, if that is what you mean. They called her a cruiser. She was an old steamer they bought in Europe. Sometimes she carried soldiers to the Dardanelles, but most of the time she lay in the Golden Horn."

"How did she happen to go to Yemen?"

The experience of a lengthening career has taught me that information may sometimes be obtained by asking for it, and this time my strategy was successful.

"It was an idea of Sultan Hamid. One night, late late, an aide-de-camp from the Palace came on board with an officer in chains, and said that he was to be taken at once to Yemen. Ten minutes later another aide-de-camp came to say good-bye to the officer, from the Sultan, and to give him his promotion as general, and to make him a present of five hundred pounds. They said he was a Circassian prince and that he had been plotting. It was a lie. But Sultan Hamid believed it. And how was he to know that you cannot start for Yemen like that, in ten minutes? It was not his trade. It was ours; but none of us was on board, and we had no coal, and no food, and nothing, and the people from the Palace said we must be gone before morning. So sailors came to wake us up—as many of us as they could find—and there was great

calamity. And we did start before morning. We got a tug to pull us, and we went around to Küchük Chekmejeh, in the Marmora, and there we stayed till we were ready to start. It took us three or four weeks. The machine was old and broken, and we had to get an Englishman to mend it. And the *Leopard of the Sea* had been lying so long in the harbour that no one could find her bottom. It was all grown with bushes and trees, like a garden. And what mussels grew in the garden! And what pilaf they made! We picked off all we could, and we ate them ourselves till we were sick of them, and we sold the rest. The mussels of the *Leopard of the Sea* were famous in Constantinople. Afterward we were sorry we had sold the mussels though. When at last we started for Yemen each one of us had ten loaves of bread and some olives and cheese. We didn't know how long we would be on the way. At the end of three days we had only just passed the Dardanelles and the cheese and olives were gone. A day or two later the bread was gone too, though we were still far from Yemen.

"Water we had, thanks to God! We had a machine for making the water of the sea sweet. It was only food we didn't have. We had to stop at an island and get some."

"What island was it?" pursued I, in curiosity, wondering how far the *Leopard of the Sea* got on ten loaves of bread a man.

"How should I know? It was an island in the White Sea." By which he meant not our White Sea but the Mediterranean. "I didn't ask the name. Greeks lived on it. The governor of course was a Turk. We were very sorry when we left it. The sea began to show himself after that. Until then we had not know him."

"Were you sick?"

The darkness hid on my face the grin without which this question may not be asked.

"My soul! Who is not sick when the wind blows on the sea—unless he is accustomed? We were not accustomed. How should we be? We had never put our noses outside the Dardanelles. It was worst for the captain and me, because we had to stay on deck and steer whether we were sick or not. But we got accustomed by and by. And the captain taught me a little about the machine which points its finger at the Great Bear, and about the papers wherein are written all the lands and islands of the earth. And after two or three weeks we found Egypt. It seemed to me a miracle. When I saw it lying white and flat on the edge of the sea and the captain said it was Egypt, I said to myself: How do we know that it is Egypt? It may be Persia. It may be England. But it was Egypt, thanks to God! And if it had not been for the Circassian I don't know what we would have done.

"He was a very good man. The aide-de-camp who brought him from the Palace said that he was to be kept shut up in a small room and that he was to eat nothing but bread and water. But we were all shut up and none of us had anything but bread and water, and not always that. And so the captain very soon let the Circassian do what he liked. And when we got to Egypt the Circassian bought food and coal for us, out of the money the Sultan had given him. For we had none. We had spent all we had at Küchük Chekmejeh and at the island. Then we went on, through the river that goes into the Arabian Sea. We had orders to take the Circassian to Jiddeh; but at Suez they brought

us a telegram telling us to go on without stopping to Hodeïda, and afterward to bring the Circassian back to Jiddeh. At Hodeïda, however, we found another telegram which said that we were to go on to Basra, for some soldiers."

"To Basra!" I exclaimed.

I began to feel hopelessly choked up with questions. I wanted to know more about the Circassian. I wanted to know more about everything. The man whom chance had brought for a moment to a stone beside me had an Odyssey in him, if one could only get at it.

"To Basra, *ya!*" he said before I could stop him. "And a time we had getting to Basra—more than two months. It was so hot we could not sleep at night, and again we had nothing to eat. And worst of all, the machine that made the water of the sea sweet got a hole in it, we used it so much, and after that the water was only partly sweet. And it was so bad we tried to find water on the land, and one night we went too near and sat." By which the mate of the *Leopard of the Sea* meant that they ran aground.

"We sat for two weeks, trying to get away. It was good that the wind did not blow in that time. In the end I don't know whether more water came into the sea or what happened, but all of a sudden we found that we could move. Then another calamity came on our heads. Although we had been sitting for two weeks we had been burning coal most of the time, trying to get away. So before we got to Basra no coal was left. The Circassian had bought more than we needed to get to Jiddeh or even to Hodeïda, but we never expected to go any farther. So we spent all our time finding wood for the machine. We burned up all the doors, all the chairs, all the tables, all the boats. We cut

down walls in the ship, we tore up decks. And then we only just got into the river of Basra.

"At Basra how good it was to put our feet on the earth! And if you knew what a country that is—hot, flat, dirty! They speak Arabic too, which none of us could understand but the Circassian. And thieves! We had already burned up most of the ship, but they would have stolen the rest if we had let them. So although we had come to land we still had no peace. And twelve hundred soldiers were waiting for us and expected to be taken away immediately. They had been in Arabia seven years, poor things, although when they went the government promised that they should stay only three. There had been three thousand of them in the beginning. More than half of them had died, not from bullets but from the sun of that country and its poisonous air. And not one of them had been paid or had had a new uniform in seven years. You would have wept to see them—how ragged and thin they were, and how they begged us to pay them and take them away.

"How could we take them away or pay them? We had not been paid ourselves for four or five months, and we had no food or water or coal, and nobody would give us any. We went to the governor, we went to the general, we went to everybody; but not a *para* could we get. The Circassian still had a little money, most of which we used in telegraphing to Constantinople. And still no money came. We had to sell our watches, our clothes, anything we had left. One day we even sold two windows—you know the little round windows in the wall of a ship? A fat Arab wanted them for his house. What could we do? We had to live. We couldn't find any others to take their places and so we nailed

kerosene tins over the holes—one inside and one outside. They looked very funny, like blind eyes. They were at the bow, one on each side."

My companion paused a moment, as if musing over the blind eyes of the *Leopard of the Sea*. Then he rolled himself another cigarette. I noticed for the first time that the minarets of Yeni Jami were fully alight, and that other lights were beginning to hang in the darkness between them.

"In the end it was the Circassian again who got us away from Basra. He gave the captain the last money he had and told him to telegraph to Sultan Hamid and say five hundred pounds must be sent to us immediately or we would go to Europe and set the Circassian free. How was Sultan Hamid in his palace to know that we had no coal and could not go to Europe if we wanted to? But the next day the governor came to the captain with five hundred pounds and a decoration, which he pinned on his coat with much speech, and invited him not to let the dangerous Circassian go. The dangerous Circassian was there listening with the others, and the governor liked to speak with him more than with any of us, because he was an *effendi* and knew all the people of the Palace. The governor after all, poor man, was no better than an exile himself.

"So at last we started back to Jiddeh, with money in our pockets and bread in the cupboard and coal in the machine. The captain took care to put a lot in the place where the windows had been that he sold, to keep the tin tight against the wall of the ship. We got along very well that time. We reached Jiddeh in forty-five days. Before we got there the captain told the Circassian that he would not give him to the governor but that he would give another man, one of

the soldiers, and say it was the Circassian, and bring the Circassian back to Egypt and let him go. But the Circassian would not allow him. He said it was not just that another man should be punished in his place, and that they would find it out in Constantinople and punish the captain and the governor and there would be many calamities. Even when the captain wept and kissed his feet, the Circassian would not allow him. You see they had lived together for so many months and had suffered so much together that they had become friends. Ah, he was a very good man. Because he was a good man God rewarded him, as you will see."

I did not see at once, however, for my companion stopped again. And when he went on it was not to give me any essential light on the history of the mysterious Circassian.

"I told you about the soldiers we brought from Basra, who had been in Arabia seven years and who had never been paid. They were so glad to leave Basra that they made little noise about their money, and the general promised them that they would get it in Jiddeh. But when they heard the story of the Circassian, how he telegraphed to Sultan Hamid and got money for us, they said it was a shame that he didn't get money for them too: they had gone seven years without a *para*. And when the general of Jiddeh told them that they would be paid in Constantinople they made much noise. They would not believe that the general had no money, and they brought the Circassian into it again and said he must telegraph to Sultan Hamid. They could not understand! It was only when the general threatened to keep them in Yemen and send the *Leopard of the Sea* home without them that they were quiet.

"We were sorry to leave the Circassian in Jiddeh, but we were to start away at last. It is the country of the Prophet, but *vallah!* it is a dirty country! We came quickly enough up to Egypt. The *Leopard of the Sea* walked more slowly than ever, because the hole in the machine for making the water of the sea sweet spoiled the water, and the bad water spoiled the machine of the ship. Still, we went forward all the time. And in Egypt, thanks to God, there was no telegram. And our hearts became light when we came once more into the White Sea, where it seemed cold to us after Yemen.

"The captain said he would stop nowhere till we got to the Dardanelles, lest he should find a telegram. But our calamities were not quite done. It was because of the soldiers again. After they smelled the air of their country once more and ate bread every day, something came to them. They went to the captain one morning and said, 'We wish to go to Beïrout.' The captain told them he couldn't go to Beïrout. He had orders to go to Constantinople. What did they wish in Beïrout? They merely answered, 'We wish to go to Beïrout.' And in the end they went to Beïrout. What could the captain do? They were a thousand, with guns, and we were forty or fifty; and they were very angry. They said they were fools ever to have left Arabia without their money and they were tired of promises.

"So we went to Beïrout. The soldiers told the captain that he need not mix in their business: they had thought of a thing to do. Only let him wait till they were ready to go. And half of them stayed on the steamer to see that he did not go away and leave them. The other half went on shore and asked where was the governor's palace. Every one was much surprised to see six hundred ragged soldiers going to the

governor's palace, and many followed them. When they reached the palace the soldiers asked for the governor. A servant told them that the governor was not there. 'Never mind,' said the soldiers, 'we are six hundred, and on the ship there are six hundred more, and we will find the governor.' Then they were told to wait a little and the governor would come. And the governor did come. For I suppose he was not pleased that there should be scandal in the city. Also it happened that he had very few soldiers of his own, because there was fighting in the Lebanon.

"He received the six hundred very politely, and gave them coffee and cigarettes, and asked them what he could do for them. And they told him their story, and what they had suffered, and how many of them had died, and that they had never been paid, and they said their hearts were broken and they wished their money. The governor said they were right, and it was hard for a man to go seven years without being paid. Still, he was not their general: how could he pay them? 'You can telegraph to Sultan Hamid,' they said, 'and he will send you the money. We shall wait here till the answer comes.' And they waited, the six hundred of them.

"They made no noise and frightened no one, but they sat there on the floor with their rifles on their knees, and smoked cigarettes with the soldiers of the governor—who pitied them and said they would never drive them away. And by and by the governor came back and said he had heard from Sultan Hamid, who said it was a sin that his children should be treated in that way, and they should have their money. And then he called a scribe, and they made an account,

and the soldiers took the money. It came to eight or nine thousand pounds. And a mistake was made by the scribe, and some soldiers got too little, and the governor gave them what was owed. And the soldiers said they were glad they had not been paid in seven years—to get so much now.

"The captain was not pleased by this work, for it put us back many days and he thought Sultan Hamid might be angry if he got too many telegrams asking for money. However, the captain was pleased and we were all pleased to get away from Beïrout with no more trouble. But of course the soldiers were the most pleased, who smelled their own country again after seven years, and who had their money at last. They sat on the deck all day counting it, and singing, and some had pipes which they played, and those who were Laz or Kürds or Albanians danced dances of their country. But before long the sea began to dance, and then they stopped. And by and by the wind blew so hard they could not stay on deck. We did not mind, because we were accustomed; and the wind was from the south, which helped us. But they were not accustomed, and they were very sick. The ship was so small and they were so many that downstairs there was no room to turn without stepping on a sick soldier. And water poured down from above, and they all got soaked as they lay on the floor. Even if we had not burned up all the sofas and tables and chairs in the sea of Basra there never would have been beds enough for them. And at last there came a night when the captain and I began to think. The ship went this side, the ship went the other side, waves rolled back and forth in the cabin, everywhere there were cracks and macks till we thought the *Leopard of the Sea*

would crack in two. By God, it was a night of much fear. But what is there more than *kismet?* It was our *kismet* that that also should pass."

I saw it was time to open the shutter of my camera, for the lights between the minarets of Yeni Jami had grouped themselves into the image of a ship. It seemed an odd coincidence. When I sat down again on my stone, after pinching the bulb, the mate of the *Leopard of the Sea* continued to stare abstractedly at the little bark of gold sailing in the dark sky.

"Who shall escape his destiny?" he uttered at length. "For six months we had had no peace. We had lacked bread. We had suffered storms. We had sat on the floor of the sea. We had been burned and frozen. We had been robbed. We had been worse off than beggars. We had been unjustly treated. We had eaten all manner of dung. But no harm had come to us, thanks to God! And the morning after that night was like a morning of paradise. The sun was bright and warm. The sea was blue blue. There was no wind. There were hardly any waves, for we were among the islands again. We could see on them the flowers of almond trees and peach trees. The soldiers said they heard the birds. They had forgotten all their calamities, the soldiers, and were sitting on the deck again, counting their gold, singing, playing pipes, dancing. And in front of us we could see the mountains of the Dardanelles."

He sighed, telling the beads of the string he carried as he went over the memory in his mind.

"There was only one thing: the *Leopard of the Sea* sat very low in the water. Why not, after the rivers that came in the night before? I thought nothing of it. We pumped,

but we didn't mind, because we were so near home. I saw, though, that the captain was thinking. I asked him if he was afraid they would make trouble for us about the telegrams and the money. Sultan Hamid often did things for reasons that were not apparent, and he never forgot.

" 'God love you!' said the captain. 'I think nothing of that. But do you remember those windows we sold in Basra? Those are what make me think. We needed bread then, it is true, and no one can blame us. Also we nailed the tin on very tightly. But in the storm I kept thinking of them. And you see the bow now is lower than the stern. Those blind eyes are under water.'

" 'They will still see the way to Stamboul,' I told him. 'There is plenty of coal behind the tin.'

" 'Yes,' he said, 'but coal is like rice. It drinks up water, more and more, without your knowing it.'

" 'Eh, if we have a *pilaf* of coal in the ship, what matter?' I said.

"He laughed.

" 'I would not mind so much if we had not burned the boats. Just look downstairs and see if there is much water about.'

"I looked, and I couldn't find any to speak of. I went down to the engine room, without telling them why I came, and there was very little. What they were thinking of down there was the machine. It had become more and more rotten, from the bad water, till it would hardly work. The door of our house was open in front of us, but when we would have run to it like boys, the *Leopard of the Sea* could only walk, slowly slowly, like an old man."

He had left out enormously, and I realized in the end that

I had small notion what manner of man he was himself. But I am bound to say that he did make vivid, as we squatted there on our neighbourly stones, the final case of the *Leopard of the Sea.*

"Why should I make much speech? The old man never found the door of his house. It was because of his blind eyes. But until the last moment we hoped we might get to the Dardanelles. The sea became more and more quiet. It was more beautiful than anything I have ever seen, like jewels with light shining through them. A great purple island stood not far away, and white houses were on it. And sails played like children on the blue of the sea. It was so beautiful and so still that the soldiers were not frightened. They noticed that the ship settled in the water, but the captain told them it was nothing. He asked me what we should do—whether we should let off steam to keep the machine from bursting. We finally decided not to. We might reach land after all, and steamers and ships were all about us. While if we let off steam and signalled for help, there would be much confusion and the soldiers might make another calamity; for they were very simple. 'Akh! if they only hadn't made us go to Beïrout!' the captain said. 'We would have been at home by this time.' But we were very sorry for them."

He stopped again for a moment. Yet I knew in my perverted literary heart that it was wholly without melodramatic intent.

"The sun set. Night came—a warm night of stars. I remember how they looked, and how the soldiers sang on the deck, and then how the *Leopard of the Sea* suddenly began to run—but down, pitching forward."

I wondered many things, but chiefly if he would say anything more. It seemed indecent to ask him—with that picture in my eyes of a lighted steamer suddenly lurching, bow foremost, out of sight. Presently he did say something, though not just what I hoped. First, however, he leaned over and patted the ground.

"The earth!" he said. "The earth! I like to feel that under my feet!"

Then he got up, made me a courteous salaam, and left me on my stone to stare at the little ship of light hanging over the dark mosque.

THE JELLY-BEAN [1]

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Jim Powell was a Jelly-bean. Much as I desire to make him an appealing character, I feel that it would be unscrupulous to deceive you on that point. He was a bred-in-the-bone, dyed-in-the-wool, ninety-nine three-quarters per cent Jelly-bean and he grew lazily all during Jelly-bean season, which is every season, down in the land of the Jelly-beans well below the Mason-Dixon line.

Now if you call a Memphis man a Jelly-bean he will quite possibly pull a long sinewy rope from his pocket and hang you to a convenient telegraph-pole. If you call a New Orleans man a Jelly-bean he will probably grin and ask you who is taking your girl to the Mardi Gras ball. The particular Jelly-bean patch which produced the protagonist of this history lies somewhere between the two—a little city of forty thousand that has dozed sleepily for forty thousand years in southern Georgia, occasionally stirring in its slumbers and muttering something about a war that took place sometime, somewhere, and that everyone else has forgotten long ago.

Jim was a Jelly-bean. I write that again because it has such a pleasant sound—rather like the beginning of a fairy

1 From *Tales of the Jazz Age,* copyright, 1922, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

story—as if Jim were nice. It somehow gives me a picture of him with a round, appetizing face and all sorts of leaves and vegetables growing out of his cap. But Jim was long and thin and bent at the waist from stooping over pool-tables, and he was what might have been known in the indiscriminating North as a corner loafer. "Jelly-bean" is the name throughout the undissolved Confederacy for one who spends his life conjugating the verb to idle in the first person singular—I am idling, I have idled, I will idle.

Jim was born in a white house on a green corner. It had four weather-beaten pillars in front and a great amount of lattice-work in the rear that made a cheerful criss-cross background for a flowery sun-drenched lawn. Originally the dwellers in the white house had owned the ground next door and next door to that and next door to that, but this had been so long ago that even Jim's father scarcely remembered it. He had, in fact, thought it a matter of so little moment that when he was dying from a pistol wound got in a brawl he neglected even to tell little Jim, who was five years old and miserably frightened. The white house became a boarding-house run by a tight-lipped lady from Macon, whom Jim called Aunt Mamie and detested with all his soul.

He became fifteen, went to high school, wore his hair in black snarls, and was afraid of girls. He hated his home where four women and one old man prolonged an interminable chatter from summer to summer about what lots the Powell place had originally included and what sort of flowers would be out next. Sometimes the parents of little girls in town, remembering Jim's mother and fancying a resemblance in the dark eyes and hair, invited him to parties,

but parties made him shy and he much preferred sitting on a disconnected axle in Tilly's Garage, rolling the bones or exploring his mouth endlessly with a long straw. For pocket money, he picked up odd jobs, and it was due to this that he stopped going to parties. At his third party little Marjorie Haight had whispered indiscreetly and within hearing distance that he was a boy who brought the groceries sometimes. So instead of the two-step and polka, Jim had learned to throw any number he desired on the dice and had listened to spicy tales of all the shootings that had occurred in the surrounding country during the past fifty years.

He became eighteen. The war broke out and he enlisted as a gob and polished brass in the Charleston Navy-yard for a year. Then, by way of variety, he went North and polished brass in the Brooklyn Navy-yard for a year.

When the war was over he came home. He was twenty-one, his trousers were too short and too tight. His buttoned shoes were long and narrow. His tie was an alarming conspiracy of purple and pink marvellously scrolled, and over it were two blue eyes faded like a piece of very good old cloth long exposed to the sun.

In the twilight of one April evening when a soft gray had drifted down along the cottonfields and over the sultry town, he was a vague figure leaning against a board fence, whistling and gazing at the moon's rim above the lights of Jackson Street. His mind was working persistently on a problem that had held his attention for an hour. The Jelly-bean had been invited to a party.

Back in the days when all the boys had detested all the girls, Clark Darrow and Jim had sat side by side in school.

But, while Jim's social aspirations had died in the oily air of the garage, Clark had alternately fallen in and out of love, gone to college, taken to drink, given it up, and, in short, become one of the best beaux of the town. Nevertheless Clark and Jim had retained a friendship that, though casual, was perfectly definite. That afternoon Clark's ancient Ford had slowed up beside Jim, who was on the sidewalk and, out of a clear sky, Clark had invited him to a party at the country club. The impulse that made him do this was no stranger than the impulse which made Jim accept. The latter was probably an unconscious ennui, a half-frightened sense of adventure. And now Jim was soberly thinking it over.

He began to sing, drumming his long foot idly on a stone block in the side-walk till it wobbled up and down in time to the low throaty tune:

"One mile from Home in Jelly-bean town,
Lives Jeanne, the Jelly-bean Queen.
She loves her dice and treats 'em nice;
No dice would treat her mean."

He broke off and agitated the sidewalk to a bumpy gallop. "Daggone!" he muttered, half aloud.

They would all be there—the old crowd, the crowd to which, by right of the white house, sold long since, and the portrait of the officer in gray over the mantel, Jim should have belonged. But that crowd had grown up together into a tight little set as gradually as the girls' dresses had lengthened inch by inch, as definitely as the boys' trousers had dropped suddenly to their ankles. And to that society of first names and dead puppy-loves Jim was an outsider—

a running mate of poor whites. Most of the men knew him, condescendingly; he tipped his hat to three or four girls. That was all.

When the dusk had thickened into a blue setting for the moon, he walked through the hot, pleasantly pungent town to Jackson Street. The stores were closing and the last shoppers were drifting homeward, as if borne on the dreamy revolution of a slow merry-go-round. A street-fair farther down made a brilliant alley of vari-colored booths and contributed a blend of music to the night—an oriental dance on a calliope, a melancholy bugle in front of a freak show, a cheerful rendition of "Back Home in Tennessee" on a hand-organ.

The Jelly-bean stopped in a store and bought a collar. Then he sauntered along toward Soda Sam's, where he found the usual three or four cars of a summer evening parked in front and the little darkies running back and forth with sundaes and lemonades.

"Hello, Jim."

It was a voice at his elbow—Joe Ewing sitting in an automobile with Marylyn Wade. Nancy Lamar and a strange man were in the back seat.

The Jelly-bean tipped his hat quickly.

"Hi, Ben—" then, after an almost imperceptible pause—"How y' all?"

Passing, he ambled on toward the garage where he had a room upstairs. His "How y' all?" had been said to Nancy Lamar, to whom he had not spoken in fifteen years.

Nancy had a mouth like a remembered kiss and shadowy eyes and blue-black hair inherited from her mother who had been born in Budapest. Jim passed her often in the street,

walking small-boy fashion with her hands in her pockets, and he knew that with her inseparable Sally Carrol Hopper she had left a trail of broken hearts from Atlanta to New Orleans.

For a few fleeting moments Jim wished he could dance. Then he laughed and as he reached his door began to sing softly to himself:

"Her Jelly Roll can twist your soul,
Her eyes are big and brown,
She's the Queen of the Queens of the Jelly-beans—
My Jeanne of Jelly-bean town."

II

At nine-thirty Jim and Clark met in front of Soda Sam's and started for the Country Club in Clark's Ford.

"Jim," asked Clark casually, as they rattled through the jasmine-scented night, "how do you keep alive?"

The Jelly-bean paused, considered.

"Well," he said finally, "I got a room over Tilly's Garage. I help him some with the cars in the afternoon an' he gives it to me free. Sometimes I drive one of his taxies and pick up a little thataway. I get fed up doin' that regular though."

"That's all?"

"Well, when there's a lot of work I help him by the day—Saturdays usually—and then there's one main source of revenue I don't generally mention. Maybe you don't recollect I'm about the champion crap-shooter of this town. They make me shoot from a cup now because once I get the feel of a pair of dice they just roll for me."

Clark grinned appreciatively.

"I never could learn to set 'em so's they'd do what I wanted. Wish you'd shoot with Nancy Lamar some day and take all her money away from her. She *will* roll 'em with the boys and she loses more than her daddy can afford to give her. I happen to know she sold a good ring last month to pay a debt."

The Jelly-bean was non-committal.

"The white house on Elm Street still belong to you?"

Jim shook his head.

"Sold. Got a pretty good price, seein' it wasn't in a good part of town no more. Lawyer told me to put it into Liberty bonds. But Aunt Mamie got so she didn't have no sense, so it takes all the interest to keep her up at Great Farms Sanitarium."

"H'm."

"I got an old uncle up-state an' I reckin I kin go up there if ever I get sure enough pore. Nice farm, but not enough niggers around to work it. He's asked me to come up and help him, but I don't guess I'd take much to it. Too dog-gone lonesome—" He broke off suddenly. "Clark, I want to tell you I'm much obliged to you for askin' me out, but I'd be a lot happier if you'd just stop the car right here an' let me walk back into town."

"Shucks!" Clark grunted. "Do you good to step out. You don't have to dance—just get out there on the floor and shake."

"Hold on," exclaimed Jim uneasily. "Don't you go leadin' me up to any girls and leavin' me there so I'll have to dance with 'em."

Clark laughed.

" 'Cause," continued Jim desperately, "without you swear you won't do that I'm agoin' to get out right here an' my good legs goin' carry me back to Jackson Street."

They agreed after some argument that Jim, unmolested by females, was to view the spectacle from a secluded settee in the corner where Clark would join him whenever he wasn't dancing.

So ten o'clock found the Jelly-bean with his legs crossed and his arms conservatively folded, trying to look casually at home and politely uninterested in the dancers. At heart he was torn between overwhelming self-consciousness and an intense curiosity as to all that went on around him. He saw the girls emerge one by one from the dressing-room, stretching and pluming themselves like bright birds, smiling over their powdered shoulders at the chaperones, casting a quick glance around to take in the room and, simultaneously, the room's reaction to their entrance—and then, again like birds, alighting and nestling in the sober arms of their waiting escorts. Sally Carrol Hopper, blonde and lazy-eyed, appeared clad in her favorite pink and blinking like an awakened rose. Marjorie Haight, Marylyn Wade, Harriet Cary, all the girls he had seen loitering down Jackson Street by noon, now, curled and brilliantined and delicately tinted for the overhead lights, were miraculously strange Dresden figures of pink and blue and red and gold, fresh from the shop and not yet fully dried.

He had been there half an hour, totally uncheered by Clark's jovial visits which were each one accompanied by a "Hello, old boy, how you making out?" and a slap at his knee. A dozen males had spoken to him or stopped for a moment beside him, but he knew that they were each one

surprised at finding him there and fancied that one or two were even slightly resentful. But at half past ten his embarrassment suddenly left him and a pull of breathless interest took him completely out of himself—Nancy Lamar had come out of the dressing-room.

She was dressed in yellow organdie, a costume of a hundred cool corners, with three tiers of ruffles and a big bow in back until she shed black and yellow around her in a sort of phosphorescent lustre. The Jelly-bean's eyes opened wide and a lump arose in his throat. For a minute she stood beside the door until her partner hurried up. Jim recognized him as the stranger who had been with her in Joe Ewing's car that afternoon. He saw her set her arms akimbo and say something in a low voice, and laugh. The man laughed too and Jim experienced the quick pang of a weird new kind of pain. Some ray had passed between the pair, a shaft of beauty from that sun that had warmed him a moment since. The Jelly-bean felt suddenly like a weed in a shadow.

A minute later Clark approached him, bright-eyed and glowing.

"Hi, old man," he cried with some lack of originality. "How you making out?"

Jim replied that he was making out as well as could be expected.

"You come along with me," commanded Clark. "I've got something that'll put an edge on the evening."

Jim followed him awkwardly across the floor and up the stairs to the locker-room where Clark produced a flask of nameless yellow liquid.

"Good old corn."

Ginger ale arrived on a tray. Such potent nectar as "good old corn" needed some disguise beyond seltzer.

"Say, boy," exclaimed Clark breathlessly, "doesn't Nancy Lamar look beautiful?"

Jim nodded.

"Mighty beautiful," he agreed.

"She's all dolled up to a fare-you-well to-night," continued Clark. "Notice that fellow she's with?"

"Big fella? White pants?"

"Yeah. Well, that's Ogden Merritt from Savannah. Old man Merritt makes the Merritt safety razors. This fella's crazy about her. Been chasing after her all year.

"She's a wild baby," continued Clark, "but I like her. So does everybody. But she sure does do crazy stunts. She usually gets out alive, but she's got scars all over her reputation from one thing or another she's done."

"That so?" Jim passed over his glass. "That's good corn."

"Not so bad. Oh, she's a wild one. Shoots craps, say, boy! And she do like her highball. Promised I'd give her one later on."

"She in love with this—Merritt?"

"Damned if I know. Seems like all the best girls around here marry fellas and go off somewhere."

He poured himself one more drink and carefully corked the bottle.

"Listen, Jim, I got to go dance and I'd be much obliged if you just stick this corn right on your hip as long as you're not dancing. If a man notices I've had a drink he'll come up and ask me and before I know it it's all gone and somebody else is having my good time."

So Nancy Lamar was going to marry. This toast of a

town was to become the private property of an individual in white trousers—and all because white trousers' father had made a better razor than his neighbor. As they descended the stairs Jim found the idea inexplicably depressing. For the first time in his life he felt a vague and romantic yearning. A picture of her began to form in his imagination—Nancy walking boylike and debonnaire along the street, taking an orange as tithe from a worshipful fruit-dealer, charging a dope on a mythical account at Soda Sam's, assembling a convoy of beaux and then driving off in triumphal state for an afternoon of splashing and singing.

The Jelly-bean walked out on the porch to a deserted corner, dark between the moon on the lawn and the single lighted door of the ballroom. There he found a chair and, lighting a cigarette, drifted into the thoughtless reverie that was his usual mood. Yet now it was a reverie made sensuous by the night and by the hot smell of damp powder puffs, tucked in the fronts of low dresses and distilling a thousand rich scents to float out through the open door. The music itself, blurred by a loud trombone, became hot and shadowy, a languorous overtone to the scraping of many shoes and slippers.

Suddenly the square of yellow light that fell through the door was obscured by a dark figure. A girl had come out of the dressing-room and was standing on the porch not more than ten feet away. Jim heard a low-breathed "doggone" and then she turned and saw him. It was Nancy Lamar.

Jim rose to his feet.

"Howdy?"

"Hello—" she paused, hesitated and then approached. "Oh, it's—Jim Powell."

He bowed slightly, tried to think of a casual remark.

"Do you suppose," she began quickly, "I mean—do you know anything about gum?"

"What?"

"I've got gum on my shoe. Some utter ass left his or her gum on the floor and of course I stepped in it."

Jim blushed, inappropriately.

"Do you know how to get it off?" she demanded petulantly. "I've tried every damn thing in the dressing-room. I've tried soap and water—and even perfume and I've ruined my powder-puff trying to make it stick to that."

Jim considered the question in some agitation.

"Why—I think maybe gasolene—"

The words had scarcely left his lips when she grasped his hand and pulled him at a run off the low veranda, over a flower bed and at a gallop toward a group of cars parked in the moonlight by the first hole of the golf course.

"Turn on the gasolene," she commanded breathlessly.

"What?"

"For the gum of course. I've got to get it off. I can't dance with gum on."

Obediently Jim turned to the cars and began inspecting them with a view to obtaining the desired solvent. Had she demanded a cylinder he would have done his best to wrench one out.

"Here," he said after a moment's search. "Here's one that's easy. Got a handkerchief?"

"It's up-stairs wet. I used it for the soap and water."

Jim laboriously explored his pockets.

"Don't believe I got one either."

"Doggone it! Well, we can turn it on and let it run on the ground."

He turned it on fuller. The dripping became a flow and formed an oily pool that glistened brightly, reflecting a dozen tremulous moons on its quivering bosom.

"Ah," she sighed contentedly, "let it all out. The only thing to do is to wade in it."

In desperation he turned on the tap full and the pool suddenly widened sending tiny rivers and trickles in all directions.

"That's fine. That's something like."

Raising her skirts she stepped gracefully in.

"I know this'll take it off," she murmured.

Jim smiled.

"There's lots more cars."

She stepped daintily out of the gasolene and began scraping her slippers, side and bottom, on the running-board of the automobile. The Jelly-bean contained himself no longer. He bent double with explosive laughter and after a second she joined in.

"You're here with Clark Darrow, aren't you?" she asked as they walked back toward the veranda.

"Yes."

"You know where he is now?"

"Out dancin', I reckin."

"The deuce. He promised me a highball."

"Well," said Jim, "I guess that'll be all right. I got his bottle right here in my pocket."

She smiled at him radiantly.

"I guess maybe you'll need ginger ale though," he added.

"Not me. Just the bottle."

"Sure enough?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Try me. I can drink anything any man can. Let's sit down."

She perched herself on the side of a table and he dropped into one of the wicker chairs beside her. Taking out the cork she held the flask to her lips and took a long drink. He watched her fascinated.

"Like it?"

She shook her head breathlessly.

"No, but I like the way it makes me feel. I think most people are that way."

Jim agreed.

"My daddy liked it too well. It got him."

"American men," said Nancy gravely, "don't know how to drink."

"What?" Jim was startled.

"In fact," she went on carelessly, "they don't know how to do anything very well. The one thing I regret in my life is that I wasn't born in England."

"In England?"

"Yes. It's the one regret of my life that I wasn't."

"Do you like it over there."

"Yes. Immensely. I've never been there in person, but I've met a lot of Englishmen who were over here in the army, Oxford and Cambridge men—you know, that's like Sewanee and University of Georgia are here—and of course I've read a lot of English novels."

Jim was interested, amazed.

"D' you ever hear of Lady Diana Manners?" she asked earnestly.

No, Jim had not.

"Well, she's what I'd like to be. Dark, you know, like me, and wild as sin. She's the girl who rode her horse up the steps of some cathedral or church or something and all the novelists made their heroines do it afterwards."

Jim nodded politely. He was out of his depths.

"Pass the bottle," suggested Nancy. "I'm going to take another little one. A little drink wouldn't hurt a baby."

"You see," she continued, again breathless after a draught. "People over there have style. Nobody has style here. I mean the boys here aren't really worth dressing up for or doing sensational things for. Don't you know?"

"I suppose so—I mean I suppose not," murmured Jim.

"And I'd like to do 'em an' all. I'm really the only girl in town that has style."

She stretched out her arms and yawned pleasantly.

"Pretty evening."

"Sure is," agreed Jim.

"Like to have boat," she suggested dreamily. "Like to sail out on a silver lake, say the Thames, for instance. Have champagne and caviare sandwiches along. Have about eight people. And one of the men would jump overboard to amuse the party and get drowned like a man did with Lady Diana Manners once."

"Did he do it to please her?"

"Didn't mean to drown himself to please her. He just meant to jump overboard and make everybody laugh."

"I reckin they just died laughin' when he drowned."

"Oh, I suppose they laughed a little," she admitted. "I

imagine she did, anyway. She's pretty hard, I guess—like I am."

"You hard?"

"Like nails." She yawned again and added, "Give me a little more from that bottle."

Jim hesitated but she held out her hand defiantly.

"Don't treat me like a girl," she warned him. "I'm not like any girl *you* ever saw." She considered. "Still, perhaps you're right. You got—you got old head on young shoulders."

She jumped to her feet and moved toward the door. The Jelly-bean rose also.

"Good-bye," she said politely, "good-bye. Thanks, Jelly-bean."

Then she stepped inside and left him wide-eyed upon the porch.

III

At twelve o'clock a procession of cloaks issued single file from the women's dressing-room and, each one pairing with a coated beau like dancers meeting in a cotillion figure, drifted through the door with sleepy happy laughter—through the door into the dark where autos backed and snorted and parties called to one another and gathered around the water-cooler.

Jim, sitting in his corner, rose to look for Clark. They had met at eleven; then Clark had gone in to dance. So, seeking him, Jim wandered into the soft-drink stand that had once been a bar. The room was deserted except for a sleepy negro dozing behind the counter and two boys

lazily fingering a pair of dice at one of the tables. Jim was about to leave them when he saw Clark coming in. At the same moment Clark looked up.

"Hi, Jim!" he commanded. "C'mon over and help us with this bottle. I guess there's not much left, but there's one all around."

Nancy, the man from Savannah, Marylyn Wade, and Joe Ewing were lolling and laughing in the doorway. Nancy caught Jim's eye and winked at him humorously.

They drifted over to a table and arranging themselves around it waited for the waiter to bring ginger ale. Jim, faintly ill at ease, turned his eyes on Nancy, who had drifted into a nickel crap game with the two boys at the next table.

"Bring them over here," suggested Clark.

Joe looked around.

"We don't want to draw a crowd. It's against club rules."

"Nobody's around," insisted Clark, "Except Mr. Taylor. He's walking up and down like a wild-man trying to find out who let all the gasolene out of his car."

There was a general laugh.

"I bet a million Nancy got something on her shoe again. You can't park when she's around."

"O Nancy, Mr. Taylor's looking for you!"

Nancy's cheeks were glowing with excitement over the game. "I haven't seen his silly little flivver in two weeks."

Jim felt a sudden silence. He turned and saw an individual of uncertain age standing in the doorway.

Clark's voice punctuated the embarrassment.

"Won't you join us, Mr. Taylor?"

"Thanks."

Mr. Taylor spread his unwelcome presence over a chair. "Have to, I'm waiting till they dig me up some gasolene. Somebody got funny with my car."

His eyes narrowed and he looked quickly from one to the other. Jim wondered what he had heard from the doorway—tried to remember what had been said.

"I'm right to-night," Nancy sang out, "and my four bits is in the ring."

"Faded!" snapped Taylor suddenly.

"Why, Mr. Taylor, I didn't know you shot craps!" Nancy was overjoyed to find that he had seated himself and instantly covered her bet. They had openly disliked each other since the night she had definitely discouraged a series of rather pointed advances.

"All right, babies, do it for your mama. Just one little seven." Nancy was *cooing* to the dice. She rattled them with a brave underhand flourish, and rolled them out on the table.

"Ah-h! I suspected it. And now again with the dollar up."

Five passes to her credit found Taylor a bad loser. She was making it personal, and after each success Jim watched triumph flutter across her face. She was doubling with each throw—such luck could scarcely last.

"Better go easy," he cautioned her timidly.

"Ah, but watch this one," she whispered. It was eight on the dice and she called her number.

"Little Ada, this time we're going South."

Ada from Decatur rolled over the table. Nancy was flushed and half-hysterical, but her luck was holding. She drove the pot up and up, refusing to drag. Taylor was drumming with his fingers on the table, but he was in to stay.

Then Nancy tried for a ten and lost the dice. Taylor seized them avidly. He shot in silence, and in the hush of excitement the clatter of one pass after another on the table was the only sound.

Now Nancy had the dice again, but her luck had broken. An hour passed. Back and forth it went. Taylor had been at it again—and again and again. They were even at last —Nancy lost her ultimate five dollars.

"Will you take my check," she said quickly, "for fifty, and we'll shoot it all?" Her voice was a little unsteady and her hand shook as she reached to the money.

Clark exchanged an uncertain but alarmed glance with Joe Ewing. Taylor shot again. He had Nancy's check.

"How 'bout another?" she said wildly. "Jes' any bank'll do—money everywhere as a matter of fact."

Jim understood—the "good old corn" he had given her—the "good old corn" she had taken since. He wished he dared interfere—a girl of that age and position would hardly have two bank accounts. When the clock struck two he contained himself no longer.

"May I—can't you let me roll 'em for you?" he suggested, his low, lazy voice a little strained.

Suddenly sleepy and listless, Nancy flung the dice down before him.

"All right—old boy! As Lady Diana Manners says, 'Shoot 'em, Jelly-bean'—My luck's gone."

"Mr. Taylor," said Jim, carelessly, "we'll shoot for one of those there checks against the cash."

Half an hour later Nancy swayed forward and clapped him on the back.

"Stole my luck, you did." She was nodding her head sagely.

Jim swept up the last check and putting it with the others tore them into confetti and scattered them on the floor. Someone started singing, and Nancy kicking her chair backward rose to her feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she announced. "Ladies—that's you, Marylyn. I want to tell the world that Mr. Jim Powell, who is a well-known Jelly-bean of this city, is an exception to a great rule—'lucky in dice—unlucky in love.' He's lucky in dice, and as matter fact I—I *love* him. Ladies and gentlemen, Nancy Lamar, famous dark-haired beauty often featured in the *Herald* as one th' most popular members of younger set as other girls are often featured in this particular case. Wish to announce—wish to announce, anyway, Gentlemen —" She tipped suddenly. Clark caught her and restored her balance.

"My error," she laughed, "she stoops to—stoops to—anyways— We'll drink to Jelly-bean . . . Mr. Jim Powell, King of the Jelly-beans."

And a few minutes later as Jim waited hat in hand for Clark in the darkness of that same corner of the porch where she had come searching for gasolene, she appeared suddenly beside him.

"Jelly-bean," she said, "are you here, Jelly-bean? I think—" and her slight unsteadiness seemed part of an enchanted dream—"I think you deserve one of my sweetest kisses for that, Jelly-bean."

For an instant her arms were around his neck—her lips were pressed to his.

"I'm a wild part of the world, Jelly-bean, but you did me a good turn."

Then she was gone, down the porch, over the cricket-loud lawn. Jim saw Merritt come out the front door and say something to her angrily—saw her laugh and turning away, walk with averted eyes to his car. Marylyn and Joe followed, singing a drowsy song about a Jazz baby.

Clark came out and joined Jim on the steps. "All pretty lit, I guess," he yawned. "Merritt's in a mean mood. He's certainly off Nancy."

Over east along the golf course a faint rug of gray spread itself across the feet of the night. The party in the car began to chant a chorus as the engine warmed up.

"Good-night, everybody," called Clark.

"Good-night, Clark."

"Good-night."

There was a pause, and then a soft, happy voice added, "Good-night, Jelly-bean."

The car drove off to a burst of singing. A rooster on a farm across the way took up a solitary mournful crow, and behind them a last negro waiter turned out the porch light. Jim and Clark strolled over toward the Ford, their shoes crunching raucously on the gravel drive.

"O boy!" sighed Clark softly, "how you can set those dice!"

It was still too dark for him to see the flush on Jim's thin cheeks—or to know that it was a flush of unfamiliar shame.

IV

Over Tilly's Garage a bleak room echoed all day to the rumble and snorting down-stairs and the singing of the

negro washers as they turned the hose on the cars outside. It was a cheerless square of a room punctuated with a bed and a battered table on which lay half a dozen books—Joe Miller's "Slow Train Through Arkansas," "Lucille," in an old edition very much annotated in an old-fashioned hand; "The Eyes of the World," by Harold Bell Wright, and an ancient prayer-book of the Church of England with the name Alice Powell and the date 1831 written on the fly-leaf.

The East, gray when the Jelly-bean entered the garage, became a rich and vivid blue as he turned on his solitary electric light. He snapped it out again, and going to the window rested his elbows on the sill and stared into the deepening morning. With the awakening of his emotions, his first perception was a sense of futility, a dull ache at the utter grayness of his life. A wall had sprung up suddenly around him hedging him in, wall as definite and tangible as the white wall of his bare room. And with his perception of this wall all that had been the romance of his existence, the casualness, the light-hearted improvidence, the miraculous open-handedness of life faded out. The Jelly-bean strolling up Jackson Street humming a lazy song, known at every shop and street stand, cropful of easy greeting and local wit, sad sometimes for only the sake of sadness and the flight of time—that Jelly-bean was suddenly vanished. The very name was a reproach, a triviality. With a flood of insight he knew that Merritt must despise him, that even Nancy's kiss in the dawn would have awakened not jealousy but only a contempt for Nancy so lowering herself. And on his part the Jelly-bean had used for her a dingy subterfuge learned from the garage. He had been her moral laundry; the stains were his.

As the gray became blue, brightened and filled the room, he crossed to his bed and threw himself down on it, gripping the edges fiercely.

"I love her," he cried aloud, "God!"

As he said this something gave way within him like a lump melting in his throat. The air cleared and became radiant with dawn, and turning over on his face he began to sob dully into the pillow.

In the sunshine of three o'clock Clark Darrow chugging painfully along Jackson Street was hailed by the Jelly-bean, who stood on the curb with his fingers in his vest pockets.

"Hi!" called Clark, bringing his Ford to an astonishing stop alongside. "Just get up?"

The Jelly-bean shook his head.

"Never did go to bed. Felt sorta restless, so I took a long walk this morning out in the country. Just got into town this minute."

"Should think you *would* feel restless. I been feeling thataway all day—"

"I'm thinkin' of leavin' town," continued the Jelly-bean, absorbed by his own thoughts. "Been thinkin' of goin' up on the farm, and takin' a little that work off Uncle Dun. Reckin I been bummin' too long."

Clark was silent and the Jelly-bean continued:

"I reckin maybe after Aunt Mamie dies I could sink that money of mine in the farm and make somethin' out of it. All my people originally came from that part up there. Had a big place."

Clark looked at him curiously.

"That's funny," he said. "This—this sort of affected me the same way."

The Jelly-bean hesitated.

"I don't know," he began slowly, "somethin' about—about that girl last night talkin' about a lady named Diana Manners—an English lady, sorta got me thinkin'!" He drew himself up and looked oddly at Clark, "I had a family once," he said defiantly.

Clark nodded.

"I know."

"And I'm the last of 'em," continued the Jelly-bean, his voice rising slightly, "and I ain't worth shucks. Name they call me by means jell-weak and wobbly like. People who weren't nothin' when my folks was a lot turn up their noses when they pass me on the street."

Again Clark was silent.

"So I'm through. I'm goin' to-day. And when I come back to this town it's going to be like a gentleman."

Clark took out his handkerchief and wiped his damp brow.

"Reckon you're not the only one it shook up," he admitted gloomily. "All this thing of girls going round like they do is going to stop right quick. Too bad, too, but everybody'll have to see it thataway."

"Do you mean," demanded Jim in surprise, "that all that's leaked out?"

"Leaked out? How on earth could they keep it secret. It'll be announced in the papers to-night. Doctor Lamar's got to save his name somehow."

Jim put his hands on the sides of the car and tightened his long fingers on the metal.

"Do you mean Taylor investigated those checks?"

It was Clark's turn to be surprised.

"Haven't you heard what happened?"

Jim's startled eyes were answer enough.

"Why," announced Clark dramatically, "those four got another bottle of corn, got tight and decided to shock the town—so Nancy and that fella Merritt were married in Rockville at seven o'clock this morning."

A tiny indentation appeared in the metal under the Jelly-bean's fingers.

"Married?"

"Sure enough. Nancy sobered up and rushed back into town, crying and frightened to death—claimed it'd all been a mistake. First Doctor Lamar went wild and was going to kill Merritt, but finally they got it patched up some way, and Nancy and Merritt went to Savannah on the two-thirty train."

Jim closed his eyes and with an effort overcame a sudden sickness.

"It's too bad," said Clark philosophically. "I don't mean the wedding—reckon that's all right, though I don't guess Nancy cared a darn about him. But it's a crime for a nice girl like that to hurt her family that way."

The Jelly-bean let go the car and turned away. Again something was going on inside him, some inexplicable but almost chemical change.

"Where you going?" asked Clark.

The Jelly-bean turned and looked dully back over his shoulder.

"Got to go," he muttered. "Been up too long; feelin' right sick."

"Oh."

The street was hot at three and hotter still at four, the April dust seeming to enmesh the sun and give it forth again as a world-old joke forever played on an eternity of afternoons. But at half past four a first layer of quiet fell and the shades lengthened under the awnings and heavy foliaged trees. In this heat nothing mattered. All life was weather, a waiting through the hot where events had no significance for the cool that was soft and caressing like a woman's hand on a tired forehead. Down in Georgia there is a feeling—perhaps inarticulate—that this is the greatest wisdom of the South—so after a while the Jelly-bean turned into a pool-hall on Jackson Street where he was sure to find a congenial crowd who would make all the old jokes—the ones he knew.

THE WAX DOLL [1]

by KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD

MOST women, I believe, are bad citizens; and I have come to the conclusion that they have to be. That is my only apology for having been a bad citizen myself. The sense of guilt is still heavy on me—after some years. I don't know why, unless it is because I used to be a suffragist; and if you take suffrage in a decent spirit, it develops your conscience. All that parading and speechifying, I suppose, did something to me; for though I acted on instinct, and all the worrying was done afterwards—well, I did worry. I am sure that I should have gloried in my behavior (or at least have thought it inevitable) if I hadn't once gazed at the vote as though it were a sacrament. My tale is not a suffrage argument—either for or against. I am not interested in suffrage any more. But I have had the Furies after me because, at one strange moment of my life, I ranged myself against the forces of government: ranged myself against them because I hadn't a principle to fit the case. I had to act as my feelings dictated, and my feelings had never had a bowing acquaintance with the criminal code. I am quite aware that a lot of women—perhaps most—will think I behaved very ill. I am nearly sure that I did. Yet would

[1] From Scribner's Magazine, copyright, 1917. By permission of the author and the publishers.

they, if caught unawares (oh, the mental "unpreparedness" of most of us!) have done differently? I should like to know—though I am now very far away from the scene of my civic turpitude, and very safe. What would a good citizen have done? And if he would have done the opposite of what I did, what good did the parading and speechifying do me, after all? Did I behave like a woman out of a harem? Or are there people who would think that my instincts weren't immoral? I put it all as a question, because the Furies have forcibly fed me some bitter doses. Of course, I know there was more than a dash of cowardice in my behavior; but it was the kind of cowardice that I had, from my earliest years, been led to consider honorable, for a woman. The whole thing is just a muddle. Why, even now, rack my memories as I can, I don't positively *know*. Still, at the time, I acted as if I thought so. . . . This story, by the way, has nothing whatever to do with suffrage: I only brought that in by way of showing that I, the protagonist—ah, no, not the protagonist!—wasn't wholly the old-fashioned woman. But shadows of the "keepsake" cling about us still, I suppose, though we may be as square-toed as you like.

I don't think my offence was extraditable. I hope not, though I have never inquired. But certainly it didn't seem, afterwards, as if America were the place for me, or I the person for America. I've stayed away ever since. It's more fun, too. And in so many strange and lovely places I've wandered to—for I've wandered like an Englishwoman in a pith helmet—my little adventure has looked, in retrospect, so innocent. China, for example, was a great comfort. Still, her face haunts me—always will. And not only hers,

but the other one: the face I never, thank God, even saw! Perhaps, if I really had seen it, I should never have had to worry. But I don't really believe that: it's part of my trouble that I can't. The uncertainty is just the humor with which fate salts things. The dish will be a savory to the end of time. Well, here it is.

I had taken my ticket for Worden—a Connecticut village on the very edge of the Sound. The expresses flash by it too quickly for one to read the name on the little station, and most people probably have never heard of it. It was familiar to me because I often went there, spring and autumn, to visit the Peeles. Their place lay three miles from the village, on a lovely inlet all their own; and my dread of the journey on a New Haven "accommodation" came to be inhibited utterly by the prospect of delicious salty drives, in an open motor, along the curve of the coast. Worden itself I had never noticed much, for the Peeles never kept me waiting there. I should say it was a dreary, down-at-heel hamlet, like so many others: all ugly frame houses and one cheap brick block; with four or five little churches, all violently snobbish, no doubt, in the matter of creed, but making up for it by the communistic dreadfulness of their architecture. That is all I ever knew about Worden.

I had a little time to wait. (It was, by the way, the old Grand Central, not the new station that is said to have replaced it.) I had checked my luggage, and had nothing but a novel to carry. I was taking a disagreeably early train, and felt rather sleepy still. In spite of the gloominess of the women's waiting-room, I decided to stay there, for the big waiting-room outside was possessed by a chattering horde of immigrants; one of those organized alien crowds that

appear sporadically in our big terminals, evidently ready to be shipped into the patient West. Every one knows the kind of thing I mean: huge parcels labelled "Disinfected," hatless women and fantastic infants, shrill and guttural sounds in the air, gestures of excitement and discouragement, somewhere in the background a responsible agent with—presumably—tickets. They swarmed over the big waiting-room, and I withdrew to the stuffier apartment. The matron was not about, and there were not many people in there—a few women washing their faces in the farther room, after a night journey, and one or two tired creatures with children.

There was nothing interesting to look at, in my half-hour, but I was determined to save my novel for the train, which I knew would stop everywhere and be a little later at every station. So I stared about—it was as much a matter of pure chance as that—at the few other women. I nearly remonstrated, I remember, with one woman who was crossly scolding a bewildered child for everything it did and did not do. I wish I had; for, by the look of her, a remonstrance would have led to a long and unpleasant conversation. In fact, that was why I didn't: so little do we know, at any given moment, what is good for us. My glance rested instead—driven by my own stupid intention—on a young woman sitting in a rocking-chair in the far corner. She rocked with a steady jerkiness, and at every forward motion one of the rockers grazed a battered suitcase that stood beside her. She herself was shabby, was uninteresting, I fancied, to the core. But I was determined to take my mind off the unreasonable mother near me. So I stared at her. She had been crying, I thought; and my imagination constructed mechanically a parting from some man. She did not look,

at least, as though she would cry at leaving her mother. You know what I mean: she was young, and seemed respectable enough in a shoddy way, but her eyes were very big, and there was a sort of awareness in them. Still, she didn't powder her nose, or even open her cheap vanity bag to contemplate herself in a mirror, and I—still cogitating rather sleepily—was grateful to her. I was, already, so tired of those gestures! Heavens, but I was on the wrong track! But one will clutch at anything when one is bored.

Her face, if you will believe me, was not interesting in any way. I was sure that everything about her was cheap: her birth, her traditions, her ideas, her clothes, her fate. I dare say, at that time, I should have expected her to be transformed by a vote. Perhaps she would have been: it is not for me to say. But the only emotion she excited was the familiar one of wonder that there should be so many colorless common people in the world, and that those common millions should somehow manage to compound decent nations. She rocked away, as I say, without stopping. Once she dropped her vanity bag, and she bent down in a great hurry to retrieve it. All her money in it, I suppose. Just a shabby, young, scarcely pretty, totally unimportant creature. I finally felt, though she seemed not to have noticed me at all, that I couldn't bear to stare at her any more. She was too tiresomely ordinary. I have often felt aggrieved that, since a face was to haunt me, it should have been so uninteresting a one: neither tragic nor comic; just one of the boring millions. Oh, I've suffered.

I looked at my watch. It was high time for the train to be announced, and I sauntered forth into the big waiting-room to inquire. It would be five minutes more, I learned,

before it was made up; and I went back. Think of it: I went back. And they write silly poetry about being the captain of one's soul. The immigrants were just too nasty and depressing: that was why I went back. And I might have been a free woman, if I hadn't gone.

Well, there she was. And just because I had been staring at this indistinguishable creature before, I turned to her again. Her eyes were shut, but she was still rocking—some people can't help it, once in a rocking-chair—and a virulent red flower in her shabby blue hat rocked with her. Did I mention that she had a red flower in her hat? I had noticed that before. It was the kind you can buy at a ten-cent store. Even with her eyes closed to the world, she was still clutching her vanity bag with tight fingers, as though her shapeless embryonic soul were in it—being incubated.

The matron came in and waddled across the room to put up the window-shade. (Where *do* station matrons come from? They all come, evidently, from the same place, and I never saw one who looked trustworthy.) My young woman's eyes were still closed, but the fat creature, in reaching the shade, knocked against her chair and startled her. The matron immediately waddled away and disappeared within, but the girl rocked wildly for a moment—on account, I dare say, of the concussion—and her foot, or the point of the rocker, something, anyhow, upset the battered suitcase. I was on my feet by this time, ready to walk out to my train, but I saw the suitcase open as it fell. Words cannot say how unnecessary, how fortuitous, it was that my eyes should have been turned, at that instant, in that direction. But they were. . . . The girl jumped; her vanity bag clattered to the floor, and she bent over the suitcase. Before I

could turn away, she had managed to shut it, but also before I could turn away, I had seen a largish package done up in a crumply white cloth—and, shaken across the edge of the suitcase as it opened, emerging from the loose, formless package within, a tiny, waxy wrist and hand. At the same instant—just the infinitesimal hint of time that it took for the girl to settle the bundle in place and fasten the feeble spring of the suitcase once more—I saw the girl's face perfectly white, as she crouched on the floor. Some women with bad hearts go white easily, but this was an inimitable, a symbolic whiteness. There was no question in my mind as I turned away—which I did as quickly as the gesture could be accomplished—that this was the pallor of the utmost possible human terror. You would look like that, not after the beasts got you, but at the very moment when you felt yourself being flung to them. In mid-air, descending to their hot breath, you would be white as she was white. Or, at least, so I take it. The peculiar startling hue of her face in that one glimpse has remained with me. I find myself matching other pallors with it and finding them creamy. I have stood above the wonderful whiteness of the dead, and her remembered face has turned that whiteness to ivory.

Yes, I turned away. I could not face her when she rose. The little waiting-room, I saw just then, had emptied itself, except for a woman asleep on a couch with her head on a carpet-bag. There were women in the inner room, but they could have seen nothing. I heard her sit down heavily again in the rocking-chair; I heard a little clatter and knew that she was picking up her precious vanity bag. But I could not have turned round and looked at her again. If I had, she would have known. Don't you see? That was my first

instinct: not to let her dream that, in that gasping instant, I had seen. The most reassuring thing I could do, to put her out of her pain, was to walk slowly towards my train, like any woman walking towards any train. I tell you that whiteness was awful. I couldn't have beheld it again. The one important thing in the world seemed to be that she should get some blood back into her face. Oh, it didn't matter if she died, but it did matter that no one should be so afraid as that. Of course, even in those few steps, I was conscious of another point of view: I knew that I could speak to the matron. But I didn't want to bring her into it, with her sly, evil face and hovering fat hands. Crime seemed beside the point: I just couldn't augment a terror like that. I've never seen anything like it—though, as you might say, I live with it and see it every day. By the time I had got out of the women's room, I was saying to myself quite seriously that it might not have been what I thought. It might, you know—I still say it seriously—have been a wax doll. Any time, all these years, I could have gone into court and sworn that I didn't *know* it wasn't a wax doll. It was the whiteness, the awful whiteness, of the woman's face. That didn't fit any theory but the worst.

I had a few thoughts, in the midst of my general haze—little thready wisps hanging in a blur. I reflected, while I made my way through the crowd of aliens and officials of every kind, that my chance was not yet gone. Yes, of course: I could report my suspicion to any gray-coated official creature. "A young woman (a red flower in her hat) sitting in the women's waiting-room, with, beside her, a battered suitcase that might bear looking into." Oh, yes, I could do that. I was quite aware of it before I reached the

gate. If I did, I might end in Bellevue; I should certainly end in the newspapers. I didn't see my way to doing it, and I marched on. I assure you I thought of those things, and I felt that it would be wilful and wicked, on the part of circumstance, to pillory me with her in the daily press, in court-rooms, under the insincere eyes of counsel. Dreadful things happen in the world all the time: why should I involve myself in a drama that did not concern me, that only wanted passionately (oh, that whiteness!) not to concern me? What were the police for? Was I to do their dirty work; to snoop about, and spy, and give information? There was a deep, deep aversion in me to being the instrument of the poor girl's undoing. It would have been like giving up, from my very hearthstone, some fainting creature the hounds were after. It was very ancient, of course, that aversion. She may have deserved anything the law could do to her. I dare say she did. But was I to hand her over, remembering that whiteness? It seemed like my duty to protect her from anything, no matter how righteous, that she was so afraid of as that. Could, indeed, anything be righteous, the contemplation of which turned a human being into that sort of pitiful pulp? I know that my attitude was full of flaws, morally and logically speaking, but it was my attitude, and I couldn't, all of a sudden, like that, get rid of it. It was "wished on" to me. I don't pretend that my dread of the newspapers and the courts was noble; yet that aversion, too, was ancient and decent—just as it was ancient and decent of me to think in that connection (as I did) of my relatives. I am not defending myself: I am only telling you how I felt. There was, besides, my constitutional and conventional unreadiness to believe that a thing which looks

lurid really is lurid. Very likely it would have been masculine of me to report her, but I am sure that it was equally masculine of me to invent the wax-doll hypothesis and to envisage Bellevue. I don't know what the masculine mind would have done with the whiteness. I only know what my mind did with it; or, rather, what it did to me.

"In less time than it has taken to tell it," as the books say, I was in the Worden train, which was precisely as dreary as usual. I don't think any of my fellow passengers were so commonplace, quite, as the girl in the waiting-room, but they were not striking. They were merely the predestined prey of a New Haven "accommodation." Very likely you know the look. There was no parlor-car, and I settled myself on the shady side of the train, and opened my novel. The gesture, naturally, was mere bravado. Never was best-seller more vainly sold; for I've never read it. I threw it away later; flung it into the sea, wouldn't let Clara Peele read it. I could hold it open before me in the train, but I could not keep it by me longer than that. I felt as though it had a spot of blood on it.

The journey was not pleasant, but it came to an end as journeys do. I said poetry to myself all the way. Not that I got much out of the poetry, but there are some long things (Swinburne's *Dolores*, for example) that just settle into the clacking rhythm of the train itself and tide you over. It seems to be what they were written for. Before I got out at Worden I looked for Ellis Peele, and saw him waiting there with the car. I was glad. Indeed, I nearly upset him by the vigor with which I flung myself at him to shake his hand, and then rushed to shut myself into the tonneau. He wanted to look for my luggage, but I assured him it

would not be on that train. They had promised me in New York that it should be, but I felt I couldn't endure the delay of his looking for my portmanteaux and carrying them to the car. Of course, Ellis paid no attention to me, and went down the platform to the baggage-car. I leaned over the side of the motor and contemplated, in real agony, the Baptist church. It looked, I remember, as though, on completion, it had been immersed, and there had been too much bluing in the water. You see . . . the conductor (symbol of authority) was still walking up and down the platform, and just as I got out of the train I had seen, alighting from the second car ahead, a shabby young woman (with a red flower in her hat) who carried a battered suit-case. I had been given another chance. Not that I could have taken it, once having thrown it away—I should by that time have been myself in a very inconvenient position. But the conductor was there to remind me, somehow, of what a bad citizen I had been.

Perhaps, if the girl had seen me, she would not have recognized me, but the most important thing to me in the world at that moment—I am sure every one will understand that—was that she should not see me. Of course, as I realized later, either she had never noticed me at all, or she didn't dream that I was on the Worden train. But I wasn't capable of realizing anything then except that I must lean over the side of the car and stare at the Baptist church. My back must have looked very seasick.

I felt better when the train puffed away; at least, the conductor had gone. There was the ticket agent left, to be sure, and he also had a uniform. Still, he didn't seem so official nearly, and he hadn't come from New York. I

longed to look out of the tail of my eye and see what direction the girl had taken; I never in my life wanted to do anything so much. Yet never has my whole body wanted to do anything so little. Of course, I didn't turn—though I was ready to, with a jerk, if she should come in sight.

Ellis came back without my portmanteaux, voluble about the evils of the system. I had quite expected them to be there, but I patronized him for his credulity. It was all I could do to pay him back for my terrible five minutes of staring at the church. And then I found that that unconscionably domestic man had errands to do. I was to dodge the girl about the main street of Worden! Or so I feared. In point of fact, though my field of vision seemed unnaturally enlarged, as if I had grown eyes at the side of my head, I didn't see her anywhere; and when we finally took the road to the inlet I breathed again, as if my heart were a real heart.

The road to the inlet is winding and varied—and very bad. Sometimes you are within sight of the Sound, and sometimes you poke muddily through thin woods: unbeautiful, deserted, too scrubby even for Sunday-school picnics. The last part lies straight along the shore, but even in the first two miles, when you are beset by the scrubby woods, the salt is clean and stinging in the air. Released from town, I always immensely liked the drive. On that day, my one desire was to get to the Peeles' comfortable, safe house. My conversation was not up to much, for I could remember nothing discussible except the humble stridency of the Baptist church. "The woodspurge has a cup of three." I found that I had a much clearer picture of it than Ellis Peele, though he must have spent hours of his life, instead of five minutes,

waiting opposite it. I got him to laughing in the end, and his laughter was delightful to my ears.

The car was crawling through deep, wet ruts, in the last stretch of woods before we were to come into the open. Ellis took a muddy turn very slowly . . . and ever so gently I groaned. "Sorry this road's in such beastly shape," he threw back over his shoulder.

"It is in beastly shape," I found strength to murmur. For me it was in beastly shape, indeed; since, a good way ahead of us, I saw a woman trudging with drabbled skirts, carrying a suitcase.

Ellis presently noticed her. "Halloo! Somebody walking it—a woman. She must be going to North Worden: quite a jaunt. I say, Alice, suppose we give her a lift when we catch up?" He stopped the car just then, to get out and do something to one of its myriad organs.

"She'd probably be insulted if you did."

"Don't you believe it! Since these last rains people have been mighty grateful." His head was bent, and I barely caught the cheerful words.

"I won't have it, Ellis. I can't make conversation with strange people."

"Whew!" He straightened himself, came round, and got into his seat again. "Since when have you been such a snob? It's not a month ago that you made me take in an old couple—made me take them clear over to North Worden, for the matter of that."

I clutched the rail in front of me. "They were old, Ellis. This woman walks like a young person. It's different."

"You must be pretty far-sighted." He craned his neck

to see. "She walks—to *my* eye—as though she were tired. Come, be a Christian, Alice. She's got a suitcase, too."

"I won't have it." My voice was very snappy. We were near enough then—though still crawling—for me to see a spot of color that I knew: a red flower nodding, as it must (I felt) have nodded, from the beginning of time, over the crown of the woman's hat.

"But she's got a suitcase—a heavy one. She's bent over with it."

My nerves had at last gone back on me. I believe, indeed, that I was just about to shriek in his ear: "I know she has a suitcase, you fool!" when luckily we met a deep lake of water, and splashed through it with noises of the Deluge. That gave me time to bite my words back; and at just that moment we passed her. She did not look up, but drew aside into the trees—not to be bespattered, one might plausibly have assumed. Through the Deluge noises I heard Ellis grunt peevishly: "Oh, very well, but I don't know what's struck you." Then, mercifully, we got past her, but not before I had recognized the hat, the vanity bag, even the contour of the averted face. I did not look back; I never saw her again. But Ellis Peele did, and I had to meet more kind protesting words: "I say, Alice, she's gone into the woods. She must think there's a short cut that way, and there isn't. She'll get up to her knees; get lost, maybe. Mayn't I just cut back and tell her—if you won't have her in?"

"You don't want to reverse the car on a road like this."

"No, but I could get out and walk back."

"I will not be left alone in the car."

He looked at me then. I shut my eyes. It was my

good fortune probably to look very ill, for he suddenly became solicitous about me. "Are you ill, Alice?"

I didn't open my eyes. "Ill enough to be pretty anxious to get to the house."

"Oh, well, of course we'll get on." And there was no more talk of helping the woman. But he did give another look back, and I had a last report. "I can see her in among the trees. She's just resting, I guess—sitting on her suitcase, anyhow."

Before we made the last turn to the shore he stared back once more down the wood-road, but he gave me no information, and I took it that he did not see her—that she had stayed among the trees.

My sudden turn was purely nervous. I wasn't ill in any real sense, but I was very grateful that I had looked ill. I didn't know that one's nerves could so befriend one. I was made to lie down at once, but I couldn't stay on the couch more than an hour. Even that was pretty hard. Still, it wouldn't do for Clara to hear me pacing the floor. Feeling that I should surely want, at once, a lot of my own things, she insisted on sending Ellis back, in spite of my protests, to meet the next train from New York. Poor Clara! If she had known that she was giving me poison! I begged him to wait until afternoon; I assured him that I needed nothing, that he must be tired, that I couldn't bear to have luncheon put off—all the things kind people pay no attention to, taking them for mere manners. But he went.

I borrowed a tea-gown and slippers of Clara, I drank beef tea and took valerian, I was very affectionate to the baby, and cringed properly before its nurse. I think I talked a lot—cheerfully. I seemed to have entered on a new life:

not a nice one. I could not imagine against what unwonted obstacles I might have to brace myself in that unfamiliar world. Lilliput or Brobdingnag could not be stranger. Perhaps I caught the first hiss of the Furies' wings as I waited for Ellis Peele to return. I know that, many times, as I lay on the long window-seat, that girl's face appeared and hovered before my seaward-gazing eyes. Very distinctly it came and hung there, white as nothing else has ever been, between me and the smooth gray of the Sound. I have never wholly rid my life of it; but it has never been so vivid since. The face, that morning, was the best sort of hallucination; something that you could take oath before a notary public that you had seen.

Ellis came back at last with the portmanteaux. He was very amiable, by way of showing me that I had put him to no trouble. By way of showing me also, I suppose, that he bore me no grudge for what he must have considered my abominable behavior earlier, he mentioned cheerfully an incident of the second trip.

"Do you remember the woman you wouldn't let me give a lift to?"

I didn't answer. I was looking out through the open window at the waves, and between me and the gray uneven horizon I saw, as clearly as I now see the pen with which I write, a white, white face. The irony of answering would have broken me.

"I picked her up again, going back to Worden—beyond where we passed her, a little nearer the village. But still in the woods. I hope you don't think it disrespectful to you, Alice, but this time I did offer to give her a lift. She was floundering about in the beastly mud, and looked awfully

tired. You needn't have been afraid of her dignity, my dear; she got in like a shot."

"With you?" It almost amused me to ask that idle question, with the face outside there—a face of flesh; no ghost, mind you—so clearly communing with me.

"No, in your place. I tried to pass the time of day with her, but I didn't get very far. She must have started for North Worden and given it up as a bad job. But I took a leaf out of your book, there: I didn't ask her whether she had or not, because I might have had to offer to run her over. And the going is *too* much."

"What did you talk about?"

"Nothing. She asked about trains, and when she found there wasn't one to New York for two hours, she said she'd rather walk, thank you. I fairly stared at her—wanting to walk through that darned mud. It's one to you, Alice, for sure. Of course, I never make any one drive with me, so I stopped and let her out. I felt better about it when I handed over the suitcase. It was light as a feather; must have been empty."

A wave of nervous nausea kept me from speaking for a moment. I shut my eyes, and before I opened them again I turned my head from the window. Then I selected the piano to stare at. I was tired of faces.

"Did you see her again?"

"No. I wouldn't have. I pointed out to her the footpath across Merry's farm. It's full half a mile shorter that way and couldn't well be muddier than the road."

"You're a chivalrous creature, Ellis. I hope you feel rewarded for teaching me manners."

"Oh, you were done up. Of course, it wouldn't have done

to take her in while you were feeling ill. And I don't think she was particularly grateful to me, though she was polite enough. As I said, I think it's one to you. My reward was just about commensurate with my deserts."

Clara yawned a little and got up. "What was your reward, after all—excepting boring Alice and me with your wandering females?"

"Oh, a very mediæval one. I found a big red flower in the tonneau when I got home. Must have dropped off her hat. But I'm not sentimental about it, Clara, my love. I gave it to the cook as I came in. She's always trimming hats. I assure you it was a lovely flower—awfully red and big."

I knew so well what to say that I turned to Alice and spoke directly to her. "Don't you think, if only on baby's account, it had better be put in the fire? *I* shouldn't want stray millinery in the house."

"Of course." Clara started off at once—for the kitchen quarters, no doubt.

"Oh, you women!" groaned Ellis. "What's wrong with a flower? And it's the cook, not the nurse. I'm sure she loved it. She doesn't know where it came from. I tell you it was gorgeous."

My calm was shattered. "Ellis Peele, it was a horror!"

He turned on me a face of wonder. " 'Twasn't! But how in the world do *you* know?"

Clara, on the threshold, saved me. "Why, Ellis, of course it would have been—the kind of woman you say she was. Anyhow, we won't have it about. Men have no sense. If you gave it to the cook, she might think she ought to use it. And she often shakes her hats at baby and lets him pull the flowers."

She disappeared. For the first time in my life, I was grateful to Clara's particular weakness, which amounted to a hygienic muddle of wild apprehensions and even wilder precautions. I wasn't sure she wouldn't disinfect the cook before returning. For my part, Heaven knew, I was quite willing she should.

"Flowers!" It was a welcome cue to Ellis. "Insects, birds, fruits, trees! I assure you, bees and cats and all sorts of woodland creatures follow her bonnets home from church. The woman's a park!"

I laughed a little, very badly. But I admitted to myself that chance, having that day crushed me, was now staying its hand. Their mere foolishness had saved me from giving myself away. I hoped it was an omen. Still, I did not care to look out again across the water—just then. Clara returned, and I rose, a little waveringly, to go up-stairs.

"Well, is the holocaust over?" Ellis jeered.

"All over. How could you be so silly?"

Ellis raised his hands to heaven. "It's lucky the woman didn't leave anything I might have handed over to baby. A doll, for example."

I think Clara turned on him then. I heard: "Ellis, you never *would*." But at that point I fainted. I remember nothing about the swoon, of course—not even feeling ill before I fell. But they said I went down quite gently and limply. I fancy I was simply very tired of coincidences.

They kept me in bed for a few days, and must have given me heart stimulants and such, for I began to plot and plan very lucidly before I was allowed to get up. The events that I have enumerated had, by that time, arranged themselves neatly and vividly in my memory—no more detail, and no

less, than what I have told you. My recollections of that day have never sifted themselves further. I remember, as I remembered then, everything I have set down here, and nothing more.

Several things were quite clear to me, before I came downstairs. The first was that I must get away as soon as possible. I could not take drives in their motor; I could not go along the wood-road back and forth to Worden. That way lay hysteria, if not something worse. I could even see myself scratching and digging in the woods, round about a certain spot, wherever the sodden leaves had been disturbed. . . . I might not be able to avoid driving with Ellis and Clara to the station when I left; but I would sit with him, on however fantastic a pretext. Nothing—not if I died for it—would drag me into the tonneau. Yes, I must go at once, and I invented a specialist—in Boston. That took a little thinking, as well as, later, a good deal of lying; for life seldom took me to Boston, and the Peeles knew it. But it was perfectly clear to me—as clear as an axiom or two times five—that I could not take any train that would deposit me in the Grand Central station. I was very hard hit, you see, from the first; and living in the house with a good citizen would never make it better. From Boston, I remembered, a blessed through train curved down somehow to Washington, and I could get back to New York by railroads that, in those days, ended weakly in ferries. The hypothetical specialist in Boston could tell me a lot of interesting things about myself that I could neatly summarize in letters. My further plan was to get out of the country before I really needed to consult a specialist. Then, when I did have to, it could be a Frenchman. I knew the kind of question they put to you when your nerves are shot to

pieces, and I could almost imagine myself, at need, telling my story to a Frenchman. You can see what I mean. Thank Heaven, I've never had to; the wide world has set me up again.

I followed my programme, got through it all successfully and plausibly. There was not a hitch. The baby, even, one day, ran a temperature, so that I could go down alone to the water and drown my novel. So smoothly did my mind work —now that I could no longer consider myself a moral creature; it hadn't worked smoothly while I still had my chance— that I led up cannily, for some hours, to the *geste* of borrowing Clara's blue glasses for the unavoidable last drive to Worden. They were an immense help. Clara sat behind with the portmanteaux. I was sorry for her, in spite of her ignorance; but, even could I have afforded it, there was not a pretext, in heaven or earth, for giving them a new car. And at least, I reflected, as we crunched along through the unchanging mud, *it*—the wax doll, I mean—had never been in the car.

That is really all. For I told you in the beginning what my life has been since that day. And, pray, do not think that I do not like my life, even though I seem to myself to be the only person in the world to know what whiteness can mean. I have times (on my worst days) of addressing myself in the cold terms of "accessory after the fact"; yes. But I have times, too, of thinking that if I had given her away, I should have loathed myself forever. Those are the days when the face comes back to me, and on the whole, you know, they are the best—except for the days when some miracle of height or valley or builded house so intervenes that I forget it all. I have occasionally a desire, so intense that it burns my mind,

to know what a good citizen would think of me. But I know, too, what the desire is worth; for Ellis Peele is a good citizen—none better—and I was at exceeding pains not to ask him. I was wrong, by the way, just now, about my worst days. My worst days—but they come very seldom, for I'm in the main a sane creature—are those when I tell myself, in all sincerity, that I have no scrap of real proof that it wasn't a wax doll.

MISS HINCH [1]

by Henry Sydnor Harrison

In going from a given point on 126th Street to the subway station at 125th, it is not usual to begin by circling the block to 127th Street, especially in sleet, darkness, and deadly cold. When two people pursue such a course at the same time, moving unobtrusively on opposite sides of the street, in the nature of things the coincidence is likely to attract the attention of one or the other of them.

In the bright light of the entrance to the tube they came almost face to face, and the clergyman took a good look at her. Certainly she was a decent-looking old body, if any woman was: white-haired, wrinkled, spectacled, and stooped. A poor but thoroughly respectable domestic servant of the better class she looked, in her old black hat, wispy veil, and gray shawl; and her brief glance at the reverend gentleman was precisely what it should have been from her to him—open deference itself. Nevertheless, he, going more slowly down the draughty steps, continued to study her from behind with a singular intentness.

An express was just thundering in, which the clergyman, handicapped as he was by his clubfoot and stout cane, was barely in time to catch. He entered the same car with the

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woman, and chanced to take a seat directly across from her. It must have been then after twelve o'clock, and the wildness of the weather was discouraging to travel. The car was almost deserted. Even in this underground retreat the bitter breath of the night blew and bit, and the old woman shivered under her shawl. At last, her teeth chattering, she got up in an apologetic sort of way, and moved toward the better protected rear of the car, feeling the empty seats as she went, in a palpable search for hot pipes. The clergyman's eyes followed her candidly, and watched her sink down, presently, into a seat on his own side of the car. A young couple sat between them now; he could no longer see the woman, beyond occasional glimpses of her black knees and her ancient bonnet, skewered on with a long steel hatpin.

Nothing could have seemed more natural or more trivial than this change of seats on the part of a thin-blooded and half-frozen passenger. But it happened to be a time of mutual doubt and suspicion, of alert suspicions and hair-trigger watchfulness, when men looked askance into every strange face and the smallest incidents were likely to take on a hysterical importance. Through days of fruitless searching for a fugitive outlaw of extraordinary gifts, the nerve of the city had been slowly strained to the breaking-point. All jumped, now, when anybody cried "Boo!" and the hue and cry went up falsely twenty times a day.

The clergyman pondered; mechanically he turned up his coat collar and fell to stamping his icy feet. He was an Episcopal clergyman, by his garb—rather short, very full-bodied, not to say fat, bearded and somewhat puffy-faced, with heavy cheeks cut by deep creases. Well lined against the cold though he was, however, he, too, began to suffer

visibly, and presently was forced to retreat in his turn, seeking out a new place where the heating apparatus gave a better account of itself. He found one two seats beyond the old serving-woman, limped into it, and soon relapsed into his own thoughts.

The young couple, now half the car-length away, were thoroughly absorbed in each other's society. The fifth traveler, a withered old gentleman sitting next the middle door across the aisle, napped fitfully upon his cane. The woman in the hat and shawl sat in a sad kind of silence; and the train hurled itself roaringly through the tube. After a time, she glanced timidly at the meditating clergyman, and her look fell swiftly from his face to the discarded "ten-o'clock extra" lying by his side. She removed her dim gaze and let it travel casually about the car; but before long it returned again, pointedly to the newspaper. Then, with some obvious hesitation, she bent forward and said:

"Excuse me, father, but would you please let me look at your paper a minute, sir?"

The clergyman came out of his reverie instantly, and looked up with almost an eager smile.

"Certainly. Keep it if you like: I am quite through with it. But," he said, in a pleasant deep voice, "I am an Episcopal minister, not a priest."

"Oh, sir—I beg your pardon! I thought—"

He dismissed the apology with a smile and a good-natured hand.

The woman opened the paper with decent cotton-gloved fingers. The garish head-lines told the story at a glance: "Earth Opened and Swallowed Miss Hinch—Headquarters Virtually Abandons Case—Even Jessie Dark"—so the bold

capitals ran on—"Seems Stumped." Below the spread was a luridly written but flimsy narrative, "By Jessie Dark," which at once confirmed the odd implication of the caption. "Jessie Dark," it appeared, was one of those most extraordinary of the products of yellow journalism, a woman "crime expert," now in action. More than this, she was a "crime expert" to be taken seriously, it seemed—no mere office-desk sleuth, but an actual performer with, unexpectedly enough, a somewhat formidable list of notches on her gun. So much, at least, was to be gathered from her paper's display of "Jessie Dark's Triumphs":

March 2, 1901. Caught Julia Victorian, *alias* Gregory, the brains of the "Healey Ring" kidnappers.

October 7–29, 1903. Found Mrs. Trotwood and secured the letter that convicted her of the murder of her lover, Ellis E. Swan.

December 17, 1903. Ran down Charles Bartsch in a Newark laundry and trapped a confession from him.

July 4, 1904. Caught Mary Calloran and recovered the Stratford jewels.

And so on—nine "triumphs" in all; and nearly every one of them, as the least observant reader could hardly fail to notice, involved the capture of a woman.

Nevertheless, it could not be pretended that the "snappy" paragraphs in this evening's extra seemed to foreshadow a new or tenth triumph for Jessie Dark at any early date; and the old serving-woman in the car presently laid down the sheet with an irrepressible sigh.

The clergyman glanced toward her kindly. The sigh was so audible that it seemed to be almost an invitation; besides, public interest in the great case was a freemasonry that made

conversation between total strangers the rule wherever two or three were gathered together.

"You were reading about this strange mystery, perhaps?"

The woman with a sharp intake of breath, answered: "Yes, sir. Oh, sir, it seems as if I couldn't think of anything else."

"Ah?" he said, without surprise. "It certainly appears to be a remarkable affair."

Remarkable indeed the affair seemed. In a tiny little room within ten steps of Broadway, at half past nine o'clock on a fine evening, Miss Hinch had killed John Catherwood with the light sword she used in her famous representation of the Father of his Country. Catherwood, it was known, had come to tell her of his approaching marriage; and ten thousand amateur detectives, athirst for rewards, had required no further "motive" of a creature so notorious for fierce jealousy. So far the tragedy was commonplace enough, and even vulgar. What had redeemed it to romance from this point on was the extraordinary faculty of the woman, which had made her celebrated while she was still in her teens. Coarse, violent, utterly unmoral she might be, but she happened also to be the most astonishing impersonator of her time. Her brilliant "act" consisted of a series of character changes, many of them done in full view of the audience with the assistance only of a small table of properties half concealed under a net. Some of these transformations were so amazing as to be beyond belief, even after one had sat and watched them. Not her appearance only, but voice, speech, manner, carriage, all shifted incredibly to fit the new part; so that the woman appeared to have no permanent form or fashion of her own, but to be only so much plastic human material out of which her

cunning could mould at will man, woman or child, great lady of the Louisan court or Tammany statesman with the modernest of East Side modernisms upon his lip.

With this strange skill, hitherto used only to enthrall huge audiences and wring extortionate contracts from managers, the woman known as Miss Hinch—she appeared to be without a first name—was now fighting for her life somewhere against the police of the world. Without artifice, she was a tall, thin-chested young woman with strongly marked features and considerable beauty of a bold sort. What she would look like at the present moment nobody could venture a guess. Having stabbed John Catherwood in her dressing-room at the Amphitheater, she had put on her hat and coat, dropped two wigs and her make-up kit into a hand-bag, and walked out into Broadway. Within ten minutes the dead body of Catherwood was found and the chase begun. At the stage door, as she passed out, Miss Hinch had met an acquaintance, a young comedian named Dargis, and exchanged a word of greeting with him. That had been ten days ago. After Dargis, no one had seen her. The earth, indeed, seemed to have opened and swallowed her. Yet her natural features were almost as well known as a President's, and the newspapers of a continent were daily reprinting them in a thousand variations.

"A very remarkable case," repeated the clergyman, rather absently; and his neighbor, the old woman, respectfully agreed that it was. After that she hesitated a moment, and then added with sudden bitterness:

"Oh, they'll never catch her, sir—never! She's too smart for 'em all, Miss Hinch is."

Attracted by her tone, the stout divine inquired if she was particularly interested in the case.

"Yes, sir—I got reason to be. Jack Catherwood's mother and me was at school together, and great friends all our life long. Oh, sir," she went on, as if in answer to his look of faint surprise, "Jack was a fine gentleman, with manners and looks and all beyond his people. But he never grew away from his old mother—no, sir, never! And I don't believe ever a Sunday passed that he didn't go up and set the afternoon away with her, talking and laughing just like he was a little boy again. Maybe he done things he hadn't ought, as high-spirited lads will, but oh, sir, he was a good boy in his heart—a good boy. And it does seem too hard for him to die like that—and that hussy free to go her way, ruinin' and killin'—"

"My good woman," said the clergyman presently, "compose yourself. No matter how diabolical this woman's skill is, her sin will assuredly find her out."

The woman dutifully lowered her handkerchief and tried to compose herself, as bidden.

"But oh, she's that clever—diabolical, just as ye say, sir. Through poor Jack we of course heard much gossip about her, and they do say that her best tricks was not done on the stage at all. They say, sir, that, sittin' around a table with her friends, she could begin and twist her face so strange and terrible that they would beg her to stop, and jump up and run from the table—frightened out of their lives, sir, grown-up people, by the terrible faces she could make. And let her only step behind her screen for a minute—for she kept her secrets well, Miss Hinch did—and she'd come walking out to you, and you could go right up to her in the full light and take her hand, and still you couldn't make yourself believe that it was her."

"Yes," said the clergyman, "I have heard that she is remarkably clever—though, as a stranger in this part of the world, I never saw her act. I must say, it is all very interesting and strange."

He turned his head and stared through the rear door of the car at the dark flying walls. At the same moment the woman turned her head and stared full at the clergyman. When he turned back, her gaze had gone off toward the front of the car, and he picked up the paper thoughtfully.

"I'm a visitor in the city, from Denver, Colorado," he said presently, "and knew little or nothing about the case until an evening or two ago, when I attended a meeting of gentlemen here. The men's club of St. Matthias' Church—perhaps you know the place? Upon my word, they talked of nothing else. I confess they got me quite interested in their gossip. So to-night I bought this paper to see what this extraordinary woman detective it employs had to say about it. We don't have such things in the West, you know. But I must say I was disappointed, after all the talk about her."

"Yes, sir, indeed, and no wonder, for she's told Mrs. Catherwood herself that's she's never made such a failure as this so far. It seemed like she could always catch women, up to this. It seemed like she knew in her own mind just what a woman would do, where she'd try to hide and all, and so she could find them time and time when the men detectives didn't know where to look. But oh, sir, she's never had to hunt for such a woman as Miss Hinch before!"

"No? I suppose not," said the clergyman. "Her story here in the paper certainly seems to me very poor."

"*Story*, sir! Bless my soul!" suddenly exploded the old gentleman across the aisle, to the surprise of both. "You

don't suppose the clever little woman is going to show her hand in those stories, with Miss Hinch in the city and reading every line of them! In the city, sir—such is my positive belief!"

The approach to his station, it seemed, had roused him from his nap just in time to overhear the episcopate criticism. Now he answered the looks of the old woman and the clergyman with an elderly cackle.

"Excuse my intrusion, I'm sure! But I can't sit silent and hear anybody run down Jessie Dark—Miss Matthewson in private life, as perhaps you don't know. No, sir! Why, there's a man at my boarding-place—astonishing young fellow named Hardy, Tom Hardy—who's known her for *years!* As to those stories, sir, I can assure you that she puts in there *exactly the opposite of what she really thinks!*"

"You don't tell me!" said the clergyman encouragingly.

"Yes, sir! Oh, she plays the game—yes, yes! She has her private ideas, her clues, her schemes. The woman doesn't live who is clever enough to hoodwink Jessie Dark. I look for developments any day—any day, sir!"

A new voice joined in. The young couple down the car, their attention caught by the old man's pervasive tones, had been frankly listening: and it was illustrative of the public mind at the moment that, as they now rose for their station, the young fellow felt perfectly free to offer his contribution:

"Tremendously dramatic situation, isn't it, gentlemen? Those two clever women pitted against each other in a life-and-death struggle, fighting it out silently in the underground somewhere—keen professional pride on one side and the fear of the electric chair on the other. Good heavens, there's—"

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!" exclaimed the old gentleman rather

testily. "But, my dear sir, it's not *professional pride* that makes Jessie Dark so resolute to win. It's *sex jealousy*, if you follow me—no offense, madam! Yes, sir! Women never have the slightest respect for each other's abilities—not the slightest. No mercy for each other, either! I tell you, Jessie Dark'd be ashamed to be beaten by another woman. Read her stories between the lines, sir—as I do. Invincible determination—no weakening—no mercy! You catch my point, sir?"

"It sounds reasonable," answered the Colorado clergyman, with his courteous smile. "All women, we are told, are natural rivals at heart—"

"Oh, I'm for Jessie Dark every time!" the young fellow broke in eagerly—"especially since the police have practically laid down. But—"

"Why, she's told my young friend Hardy," the old gentleman rode him down, "that she'll find Hinch if it takes her lifetime! Knows a thing or two about actresses, she says. Says the world isn't big enough for the creature to hide from her. Well! What do you think of that?"

"Tell what we were just talking about, George," said the young wife, looking at her husband with grossly admiring eyes.

"But oh, sir," began the old woman timidly, "Jack Catherwood's been dead ten days now, and—and—"

"Woman got on my car at nine o'clock to-night," interjected the subway guard, who, having flung open the doors for the station, was listening excitedly to the symposium; "wore a brown veil and goggles. I'd 'a' bet every dollar I had—"

"Ten days, madam! And what is that, pray?" exploded

the old gentleman, rising triumphantly. "A lifetime, if necessary! Oh, never fear! Mrs. Victorian was considered pretty clever, eh? Wasn't she? Remember what Jessie Dark did for her? Nan Parmalee, too—though the police did their best to steal her credit. She'll do just as much for Miss Hinch—you may take it from me!"

"But how's she going to make the capture, gentlemen?" cried the young fellow, getting his chance at last. "That's the point my wife and I've been discussing. Assuming that she succeeds in spotting this woman-devil, what will she do? Now—"

"Do! Yell for the police!" burst from the old gentleman at the door.

"And have Miss Hinch shoot her—and then herself, too? Wouldn't she have to—"

"Grand Central!" cried the guard for the second time; and the young fellow broke off reluctantly to find his bride towing him strongly toward the door.

"Hope she nabs her soon, anyway," he called back to the clergyman over his shoulder. "The thing's getting on my nerves. One of these kindergarten reward-chasers followed my wife for five blocks the other day, just because she's got a pointed chin, and I don't know what might have happened if I hadn't come along and—"

Doors rolled shut behind him, and the train flung itself on its way. Within the car a lengthy silence ensued. The clergyman stared thoughtfully at the floor, and the old woman fell back upon her borrowed paper. She appeared to be re-reading the observations of Jessie Dark with considerable care. Presently she lowered the paper and began a quiet search for something under the folds of her shawl; and at

length, her hands emerging empty, she broke the silence with a timid request:

"Oh, sir—have you a pencil you could lend me, please? I'd like to mark something in the piece to send to Mrs. Catherwood. It's what she says here about the disguises, sir."

The kindly divine felt in his pockets, and after some hunting produced a pencil—a white one with blue lead. She thanked him gratefully.

"How is Mrs. Catherwood bearing all this strain and anxiety?" he asked suddenly. "Have you seen her to-day?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I've been spending the evening with her since nine o'clock, and am just back from there now. Oh, she's very much broke up, sir."

She looked at him hesitatingly. He stared straight in front of him, saying nothing, though conceivably he knew, in common with the rest of the reading world, that Jack Catherwood's mother lived, not on 126th Street, but on East Houston Street. Possibly he might have wondered if his silence had not been an error of judgment. Perhaps that mis-statement had not been a slip, but something cleverer?

The woman went on with a certain eagerness: "Oh, sir, I only hope and pray those gentlemen may be right, but it does look to Mrs. Catherwood, and me too, that if Jessie Dark was going to catch her at all, she'd have done it before now. Look at those big, bold blue eyes she had, sir, with lashes an inch long, they say, and that terrible long chin of hers. They do say she can change the color of her eyes, not forever of course, but put a few of her drops into them and make them look entirely different for a time. But that chin, ye'd say—"

She broke off; for the clergyman, without preliminaries of

any sort, had picked up his heavy stick and suddenly risen.

"Here we are at Fourteenth Street," he said, nodding pleasantly. "I must change here. Good night. Success to Jessie Dark, I say!"

He was watching the woman's faded face and he saw just that look of respectful surprise break into it that he had expected.

"Fourteenth Street! I'd no notion at all we'd come so far. It's where I get out too, sir, the expresses not stopping at my station."

"Ah?" said the clergyman, with the utmost dryness.

He led the way, limping and leaning on his stick. They emerged upon the chill and cheerless platform, not exactly together, yet still with some reference to their acquaintanceship on the car. But the clergyman, after stumping along a few steps, all at once realized that he was walking alone, and turned. The woman had halted. Over the intervening space their eyes met.

"Come," said the man gently. "Come, let us walk about a little to keep warm."

"Oh, sir—it's too kind of you, sir," said the woman, coming forward.

From other cars two or three blue-nosed people had got off to make the change; one or two more came straggling in from the street; but, scattered over the bleak concrete expanse, they detracted little from the isolation that seemed to surround the woman and the clergyman. Step for step, the odd pair made their way to the extreme northern end of the platform.

"By the way," said the clergyman, halting abruptly, "may I see that paper again for a moment?"

"Oh, yes, sir—of course," said the woman, producing it

from beneath her shawl. "I thought you had finished with it, and I—"

He said that he wanted only to glance at it for a moment; but he fell to looking through it page by page, with considerable care. The woman looked at him several times. Finally she said hesitatingly:

"I thought, sir, I'd ask the ticket-chopper could he say how long before the next train. I'm very late as it is, sir, and I still must stop to get something to eat before I go to bed."

"An excellent idea," said the clergyman.

He explained that he, too, was already an hour behind time, and was spending the night with cousins in Newark, to boot. Side by side, they retraced their steps down the platform, questioned the chopper with scant results, and then, as by some tacit consent, started slowly back again. However, before they had gone very far, the woman all at once stopped short and, with a white face, leaned against the wall.

"Oh, sir, I'm afraid I'll just have to stop and get a bite somewhere before I go on. You'll think me foolish, sir, but I missed my supper entirely to-night, and there is quite a faint feeling coming over me."

The clergyman looked at her with apparent concern. "Do you know, my friend, you seem to anticipate all my own wants? Your mentioning something to eat just now reminded me that I myself was all but famishing." He glanced at his watch, appearing to deliberate. "Yes—it will not take long. Come, we will find a modest eating-place together."

"Oh, sir," she stammered, "but—you wouldn't want to eat with a poor old woman like me, sir."

"And why not? Are we not all equal in the sight of God?"

They ascended the stairs together, like any prosperous parson and his poor parishioner, and coming out into Fourteenth Street, started west. On the first block they came to a restaurant, a brilliantly lighted, tiled and polished place of the quick-lunch variety. But the woman timidly preferred not to stop here, saying that the glare of such places was very bad for her old eyes. The divine accepted the objection as valid, without argument. Two blocks farther on they found on a corner a quieter resort, an unpretentious little haven which yet boasted a "Ladies' Entrance" down the side street.

They entered by the front door, and sat down at a table, facing each other. The woman read the menu through, and finally, after some embarrassed uncertainty, ordered poached eggs on toast. The clergyman ordered the same. The simple meal was soon despatched. Just as they were finishing it, the woman said apologetically:

"If you'll excuse me, sir—could I see the bill of fare a minute? I think I'd best take a little pot of tea to warm me up, if they do not charge too high."

"I haven't the bill of fare," said the clergyman.

They looked diligently for the cardboard strip, but it was nowhere to be seen. The waiter drew near.

"Yes, sir! I left it there on the table when I took the order."

"I'm sure I can't imagine what's become of it," repeated the clergyman, rather insistently.

He looked hard at the woman, and found that she was looking hard at him. Both pairs of eyes fell instantly.

The waiter brought another bill of fare; the woman ordered tea; the waiter came back with it. The clergyman paid for both orders with a bill that looked hard-earned.

The tea proved to be very hot: it could not be drunk down at a gulp. The clergyman, watching the woman intently as she sipped, seemed to grow more and more restless. His fingers drummed the tablecloth: he could hardly sit still. All at once he said: "What is that calling in the street? It sounds like newsboys."

The woman put her old head on one side and listened. "Yes, sir. There seems to be an extra out."

"Upon my word," he said, after a pause. "I believe I'll go get one. Good gracious! Crime is a very interesting thing, to be sure!"

He rose slowly, took down his shovel-hat from the hanger near him, and, grasping his heavy stick, limped to the door. Leaving it open behind him, much to the annoyance of the proprietor in the cashier's cage, he stood a moment in the little vestibule, looking up and down the street. Then he took a few slow steps eastward, beckoning with his hand as he went, and so passed out of sight of the woman at the table.

The eating-place was on the corner, and outside the clergyman paused for half a breath. North, east, south, and west he looked, and nowhere he found what his flying glance sought. He turned the corner into the darker cross-street, and began to walk, at first slowly, continually looking about him. Presently his pace quickened, quickened so that he no longer even stayed to use his stout cane. In another moment he was all but running, his club-foot pounding the icy sidewalk heavily as he went. A newsboy thrust an extra under his very nose, and he did not even see it.

Far down the street, nearly two blocks away, a tall figure in a blue coat stood and stamped in the freezing sleet; and

the hurrying divine sped straight toward him. But he did not get very near. For, as he passed the side entrance at the extreme rear of the restaurant, a departing guest dashed out so recklessly as to run full into him, stopping him dead.

Without looking at her, he knew who it was. In fact, he did not look at her at all, but turned his head hurriedly east and west, sweeping the dark street with a swift eye. But the old woman, having drawn back with a sharp exclamation as they collided, rushed breathlessly into apologies:

"Oh, sir—excuse me! A newsboy popped his head into the side door just after you went out, and I ran to him to get you the paper. But he got away too quick for me, sir, and so I—"

"Exactly," said the clergyman in his quiet deep voice. "That must have been the very boy I myself was after."

On the other side, two men had just turned into the street, well muffled against the night, talking cheerfully as they trudged along. Now the clergyman looked full at the woman, and she saw that there was a smile on his face.

"As he seems to have eluded us both, suppose we return to the subway?"

"Yes, sir; it's full time I—"

"The sidewalk is so slippery," he went on gently, "perhaps you had better take my arm."

Behind the pair in the dingy restaurant, the waiter came forward to shut the door, and lingered to discuss with the proprietor the sudden departure of his two patrons. However, the score had been paid with a liberal tip for service, so there was no especial complaint to make. After listening to some unfavorable comments on the ways of the clergy, the waiter returned to his table to set it in order.

On the floor in the carpeted aisle between tables lay a

white piece of cardboard, which his familiar eye recognized as part of one of his own bills of fare, face downward. He stooped and picked it up. On the back of it was some scribbling, made with a blue lead-pencil.

The handwriting was very loose and irregular, as if the writer had had his eyes elsewhere while he wrote, and it was with some difficulty that the waiter deciphered this message:

Miss Hinch 14th St. subway Get police quick

The waiter carried this curious document to the proprietor, who read it over a number of times. He was a dull man, and had a dull man's suspiciousness of a practical joke. However, after a good deal of irresolute discussion, he put on his overcoat and went out for a policeman. He turned west, and half way up the block met an elderly bluecoat sauntering east. The policeman looked at the scribbling, and dismissed it profanely as a wag's foolishness of the sort that was bothering the life out of him a dozen times a day. He walked along with the proprietor, and as they drew near to the latter's place of business, both became aware of footsteps thudding nearer up the cross-street from the south. As they looked up, two young policemen, accompanied by a man in a uniform like a street-car conductor's, swept around the corner and dashed straight into the restaurant.

The first policeman and the proprietor ran in after them, and found them staring about rather vacantly. One of the arms of the law demanded if any suspicious characters had been seen about the place, and the dull proprietor said no. The officers, looking rather flat, explained their errand. It seemed that a few moments before, the third man, who was a ticket-chopper at the subway station, had found a mysteri-

ous message lying on the floor by his box. Whence it had come, how long it had lain there, he had not the slightest idea. However, there it was. The policeman exhibited a crumpled white scrap torn from a newspaper, on which was scrawled in blue pencil:

Miss Hinch Miller's Restaurant Get police quick

The first policeman, who was both the oldest and the fattest of the three, produced the message on the bill of fare, so utterly at odds with this. The dull proprietor, now bethinking himself, mentioned the clergyman and the old woman who had taken poached eggs and tea together, called for a second bill of fare, and departed so unexpectedly by different doors. The ticket-chopper recalled that he had seen the same pair at his station: they had come up, he remembered, and questioned him about trains. The three policemen were momentarily puzzled by this testimony. But it was soon plain to them that if either the woman or the clergyman really had any information about Miss Hinch—a highly improbable supposition in itself—they would never have stopped with peppering the neighborhood with silly little contradictory messages.

"They're a pair of old fools tryin' to have sport with the police, and I'd like to run them in for it," growled the fattest of the officers; and this was the general verdict.

The little conference broke up. The dull proprietor returned to his cage, the waiter to his table; the subway man departed on the run for his chopping box; the three policemen passed out into the bitter night. They walked together, grumbling, and their feet, perhaps by some subconscious impulse, turned eastward toward the subway. And in the

middle of the next block a man came running up to them.

"Officer, look what I found on the sidewalk a minute ago. Read that scribble!"

He held up a white slab which proved to be part of a bill of fare from Miller's Restaurant. On the back of it the three peering officers saw, almost illegibly scrawled in blue pencil:

Police! Miss Hinch 14th St. subw

The hand trailed off on the *w* as though the writer had been suddenly interrupted. The fat policeman blasphemed and threatened arrests. But the second policeman, who was dark and wiry, raised his head from the bill of fare and said suddenly: "Tim, I believe there's something in this."

"There'd ought to be ten days on the Island in it for thim," growled fat Tim.

"Suppose, now," said the other policeman, staring intently at nothing, "the old woman was Miss Hinch herself, f'r instance, and the parson was shadowing her while pretendin' he never suspicioned her, and Miss Hinch not darin' to cut and run for it till she was sure she had a clean getaway. Well now, Tim, what better could he do—"

"That's right!" exclaimed the third policeman. "'Specially when ye think that Hinch carries a gun, an'll use it, too! Why not have a look in at the subway station anyway, the three of us?"

The proposal carried the day. The three officers started for the subway, the citizen following. They walked at a good pace and without more talk; and both their speed and their silence had a subtle psychological reaction. As the minds of the four men turned inward upon the odd behavior

of the pair in Miller's Restaurant, the conviction that, after all, something important might be afoot grew and strengthened within each one of them. Unconsciously their pace quickened. It was the wiry policeman who first broke into an open run, but the three other men had been for twenty paces on the verge of it.

However, these consultations and vacillations had taken time. The stout clergyman and the poor old woman had five minutes' start of the officers of the law, and that, as it happened, was all that the occasion required. On Fourteenth Street, as they made their way arm in arm to the station, they were seen, and remembered, by a number of belated pedestrians. It was observed by more than one that the woman lagged as if she were tired, while the club-footed divine, supporting her on his arm, steadily kept her up to his own brisk gait.

So walking, the pair descended the subway steps, came out upon the bare platform again, and presently stood once more at the extreme uptown end of it, just where they had waited half an hour before. Near by a careless porter had overturned a bucket of water, and a splotch of thin ice ran out and over the edge of the concrete. Two young men who were taking lively turns up and down distinctly heard the clergyman warn the woman to look out for this ice. Far away to the north was to be heard the faint roar of an approaching train.

The woman stood nearest the track, and the clergyman stood in front of her. In the vague light their looks met, and each was struck by the pallor of the other's face. In addition, the woman was breathing hard, and her hands and feet betrayed some nervousness. It was difficult now to ignore

the too patent fact that for an hour they had been clinging desperately to each other, at all costs; but the clergyman made a creditable effort to do so. He talked ramblingly, in a voice sounding only a little unnatural, for the most part of the deplorable weather and his train to Newark, for which he was now so late. And all the time both of them were incessantly turning their heads toward the station entrances, as if expecting some arrival.

As he talked, the clergyman kept his hands unobtrusively busy. From the bottom edge of his black sack-coat he drew a pin, and stuck it deep into the ball of his middle finger. He took out his handkerchief to dust the hard sleet from his hat; and under his overcoat he pressed the handkerchief against his bleeding finger. While making these small arrangements, he held the woman's eyes with his own, talking on; and, still holding them, he suddenly broke off his random talk and peered at her cheek with concern.

"My good woman, you've scratched your cheek somehow! Why, bless me, it's bleeding quite badly."

"Never mind,—never mind," said the woman, and swept her eyes hurriedly toward the entrance.

"But, good gracious, I must mind! The blood will fall on your shawl. If you will permit me—ah!"

Too quick for her, he leaned forward and, through the thin veil, swept her cheek hard with the handkerchief; removing it, he held it up so that she might see the blood for herself. But she did not glance at the handkerchief, and neither did he. His gaze was riveted upon her cheek, which looked smooth and clear where he had smudged the clever wrinkles away.

Down the steps and upon the platform pounded the feet of three flying policemen. But it was evident now that the express would thunder in just ahead of them. The clergyman, standing close in front of the woman, took a firmer grip on his heavy stick and a look of stern triumph came into his face.

"You're not so terribly clever, after all!"

The woman had sprung back from him with an irrepressible exclamation, and in that instant she was aware of the police.

However, her foot slipped upon the treacherous ice—or it may have tripped on the stout cane, when the clergyman suddenly shifted its position. And in the next breath the express train roared past.

By one of those curious chances which sometimes refute all experience, the body of the woman was not mangled or mutilated in the least. There was a deep blue bruise on the left temple, and apparently that was all; even the ancient hat remained on her head, skewered fast by the long pin. It was the clergyman who found the body huddled at the side of the dark track where the train had flung it—he who covered the still face and superintended the removal to the platform. Two eye-witnesses of the tragedy pointed out the ice on which the unfortunate woman had slipped, and described their horror as they saw her companion spring forward just too late to save her.

Not wishing to bring on a delirium of excitement among the bystanders, two policemen drew the clergyman quietly aside and showed him the three mysterious messages. Much affected by the shocking end of his sleuthery as he was, he

readily admitted having written them. He briefly recounted how the woman's strange movements on 126th Street had arrested his attention and how watching her closely on the car, he had finally detected that she wore a wig. Unfortunately, however, her suspicions had been aroused by his interest in her, and thereafter a long battle of wits had ensued between them—he trying to summon the police without her knowledge, she dogging him close to prevent that, and at the same time watching her chance to give him the slip. He rehearsed how, in the restaurant, when he had invented an excuse to leave her for an instant, she had made a bolt and narrowly missed getting away; and finally how, having brought her back to the subway and seeing the police at last near, he had decided to risk exposing her make-up, with this unexpectedly shocking result.

"And now," he concluded in a shaken voice, "I am naturally most anxious to know whether I am right—or have made some terrible mistake. Will you look at her, officer, and tell me if it is indeed—she?"

But the fat policeman shook his head over the well-known ability of Miss Hinch to look like everybody else in the world but herself.

"It'll take God Almighty to tell ye that, sir—saving your presence. I'll leave it f'r headquarters," he continued, as if that were the same thing. "But, if it is her, she's gone to her reward, sir."

"God pity her!" said the clergyman.

"Amen! Give me your name, sir. They'll likely want you in the morning."

The clergyman gave it: Rev. Theodore Shaler, of Denver;

city address, a number on East 126th Street. Having thus discharged his duty in the affair, he started sadly to go away; but, passing by the silent figure stretched on a bench under the ticket-seller's overcoat, he bared his head and stopped for one last look at it.

The parson's gentleness and efficiency had already won favorable comments from the bystanders, and of the first quality he now gave a final proof. The dead woman's balled-up handkerchief, which somebody had recovered from the track and laid upon her breast, had slipped to the floor; and the clergyman, observing it, stooped silently to restore it again. This last small service chanced to bring his head close to the head of the dead woman; and, as he straightened up again, her projecting hatpin struck his cheek and ripped a straight line down it. This in itself would have been a trifle, since scratches soon heal. But it happened that the point of the hatpin caught under the lining of the clergyman's perfect beard and ripped it clean from him; so that, as he rose with a suddenly shrilled cry, he turned upon the astonished onlookers the bare, smooth chin of a woman, curiously long and pointed.

There were not many such chins in the world, and the urchins in the street would have recognized this one. Amid a sudden uproar which ill became the presence of the dead, the police closed in on Miss Hinch and handcuffed her with violence, fearing suicide, if not some new witchery; and at the station-house an unemotional matron divested the famous impersonator of the last and best of all her many disguises.

This much the police did. But it was everywhere under-

stood that it was Jessie Dark who had really made the capture, and the papers next morning printed pictures of the unconquerable little woman and of the hatpin with which she had reached back from another world to bring her greatest adversary to justice.

A SEPARATE PEACE [1]

by Ernest Hemingway

Nick sat against the wall of the church where they had dragged him to be clear of machine gun fire in the street. Both legs stuck out awkwardly. He had been hit in the spine. His face was sweaty and dirty. The sun shone on his face. The day was very hot. Rinaldi, big backed, his equipment sprawling, lay face downward against the wall. Nick looked straight ahead brilliantly. The pink wall of the house opposite had fallen out from the roof, and an iron bedstead hung twisted toward the street. Two Austrian dead lay in the rubble in the shade of the house. Up the street were other dead. Things were getting forward in the town. It was going well. Stretcher bearers would be along any time now. Nick turned his head and looked down at Rinaldi. "Senta Rinaldi: Senta. You and me we've made a separate peace." Rinaldi lay still in the sun, breathing with difficulty. "We're not patriots." Nick turned his head away, smiling sweatily. Rinaldi was a disappointing audience.

1 From *In Our Time,* copyright, 1925, by Boni & Liveright. By permission of the publishers.

LOCHINVÁROVIČ: A ROMANTIC STORY [1]

by Richard Hughes

I

For weeks, often, after autumn has definitely taken hold of the Balkan uplands, summer still lingers on the low shores of the Adriatic. Even Trieste still keeps a semblance of summer: though Trieste is now far too melancholy a town to be able to do much with it. Up in the Giulian Alps it is almost winter: on the bare limestone levels of the Karst a steady and biting wind makes a real hardship of sleeping in the open: but once one has dived over the almost precipitous ledge of the plateau that overhangs the city one is once more able to feel the hot dust of the roadway blowing up against one's hands, and to sit for hours on the Mole, staring at the wish-wash of the sea—or at the other people sitting there staring.

But that is, really, another story: it is not my present purpose to explain why I found myself in Trieste. This story is concerned with a rather remarkable love-affair: of which I would have known nothing if it had not happened that I was practically destitute at that time. I took a bed in a

1 From *A Moment of Time,* published by Chatto & Windus. By permission of the publishers.

common lodging-house, in a row of other beds, and used to buy my food cheap in the market—it was cheap because it certainly would not have been saleable the next day; and go to bed, as late as possible, in my clothes.

The end of it all was that I started off on a long expedition with Mitar Lochinvárovič: but we neither of us emerged from it much richer. It was his idea, and quite a good one: he was distinctly clever, and as loyal a friend as one could hope for, and a very good shot with an automatic, which he much preferred to a knife: but the whole thing broke down because his health was giving way; as generally comes sooner rather than later to men who lead such a hard life as he had led. Indeed, I doubt whether he is still live. He had long ceased to draw any satisfaction from smoking, and, when I gave him a cigarette, used to rip it up with his thumb-nail and eat the tobacco. He had suffered from chronic heartburn for years, he told me: and unless he had plenty to drink his hand shook so that he could hardly control it.

His bed was next to mine: on the other side of me was a young Sudanese negro who was always too dead drunk to be of much use for social purposes. Mitar kept a walking-stick of Napoleon's under his bed, wrapped up in newspaper: and he showed it me one morning, by way of fraternization. The Emperor had sent it as a present to some Montenegrin lady: Mitar had kept the letter which accompanied it too. He never told me how he came by them: nor how he came by the Great Seal of that once-glorious rival to Venice, the Republic of Ragusa, which he carried in his waistcoat pocket. In another pocket of his waistcoat was some very old cheese, and some Greek and Roman coins. It is true that he had been a brigand when he was quite a lad, but I think he ac-

quired these things later. Indeed, he did not make much out of brigandage, or he would not have become an ironmonger—which he did in desperation, he told me: despair of making a living by more normal means. But he presently gave up trade, and became a spy in the Turkish secret service. At last he was caught by the Greeks, court-martialled, and rather badly shot; so that he had a different scar to ache for every possible change in the weather. Indeed, for several years after his execution he was too crippled for a very active life. However, he managed to extract quite a creditable living from the white slave traffic which tided him over till the Great War came, when he obtained a responsible position in the administration of an American Relief Fund in the Balkans.

At the time I met him he had developed an excellent scheme for smuggling opium into the United States. It was very ingenious, because it was so contrived that there was no possible chance of getting imprisoned. The only difficulty lay in making the American buyer pay up. As a second string, he was blackmailing his brother-officers of the Relief Fund, who were mostly very well off by now.

But, in spite of all these resources, he had got himself landed in Trieste in a destitute condition. We used to go and sup together at a little slum wine-shop where he was allowed credit: and sit there afterwards drinking the filthy ink they call *Vino Nero* in Trieste: or *šljivovica,* which is a spirit extracted from plums. Sometimes he would pull out the Great Seal, and expatiate on the glories of the dead Republic: or tell rather fabulous stories about King Dukljan the First—who was, he explained, the earliest king there ever was in the world, and seemed somehow mixed up with Deucalion: or vague and misty stories about being shot and knifed

and strangled and raped; or of having one's eyes put out before one was crucified, which is the Macedonian custom. But one evening he explored in the lining of his coat and brought out a woman's photograph, which he handed to me to look at.

It was a bad photograph, but it was enough to convince me that I had never seen so beautiful a woman; and probably never would see.

Mitar took it from my hands and stared at it doggedly. Then he hiccoughed, sighed, and replaced it in his pocket.

II

Love at first sight is a strange and beautiful invention of the Deity. It is curiously discrete: that is to say, it bears little relation or resemblance to anything else in the Universe: a kind of hint that God is not reasonable by necessity but because He prefers to be: an everlasting reminder of the sort of Universe He could have created had He preferred to be absurd. Of course, looking at it after the event, one can shake one's head and point out this or that reason why it should have occurred, contributive causes as it were: but one can never say that, given such and such circumstances, it *will* occur. One might shake one's head and say that, given an almost Oriental upbringing—in other words, having never seen any man except her father and brothers at close quarters—Natya was bound to fall head over heels with the first man she should meet: provided, of course, that he was not her lawfully intended husband. And yet one could not be sure. . . . Or one might say that, given such a beautiful girl as Natya, and given romantic circumstances, given

sufficient difficulty in attaining her, an adventurous and inflammable man like Mitar was bound to fall in love with her the moment he saw her. One might go further: one might argue that, though Mitar can never have been in his person particularly striking, yet the glory of a perfectly colourless American uniform (for it was during the Relief Fund phase) would single him out to her from among the bright-coloured costumes she was used to. One might say that, while in her case she had seen so few men that she might fall in love with anyone, he had seen so many women that he would be able to appreciate how far above other women she was: that while her eye would have the primitive keenness of its appetite completely unspoilt, his would have the added and truer keenness of the connoisseur: like the man who found the treasure in the field, and sold all that he had to buy it.

Those, at any rate, are the arguments one *might* set out, if one was told that Mitar went to Natya's home to borrow a wheelbarrow in the name of the United States of America, and that by some incredible happening he was met at the door by Natya herself, eye to eye.

Mitar borrowed the wheelbarrow: and then, with all the dignity of an American officer in his bearing, trundled it off down the little sandy road to his quarters in the village of Dobruca.

Of course, it was not very long before Natya's mother guessed there was something in the wind. Young girls do not, except on the stage, lean out of their windows night after night talking only to the moon. However fond they may be of their houses and their gardens, they do not pour into the dark bushes beneath quite such a flood of endear-

ments as Natya, constant-voiced as the nightingale, used to shower down into the darkness from her little casement each night. And if it had not been that the moonlight lit up the whole white wall of the house, so that if the mother had herself leant from her window she would have been visible from below, she might have heard that these outpourings were no mere monologue. Constant as the nightingale-song from above, there came from the bushes below a murmur like the unstillable sea, a thrilling voice that rose to Natya's window more persistently, more intoxicatingly, more overpoweringly than all the musky perfumes of the garden. If her mother had dared to lean out, she might have seen a little silk kerchief flutter down into the darkness, which Mitar caught and folded neatly, and placed in his pocket-book together with the notes he kept against a rainy day of his brother-officers' embezzlements. And presently she might have seen a long ribband let down, and then drawing up a small, heavy object tied to it—the Great Seal of the Republic of Ragusa, which Natya quickly hid between her two little breasts. Moreover, she could not fail to notice that Natya by day was changed: that when she should have been industriously embroidering shirts for her brothers, she used instead to lie on her back on her bed, staring vaguely at the ceiling and occasionally touching with the very tips of her fingers the little lump between her breasts.

No more could Major Thuddey fail to notice that Mitar was changed: that when he should have been standing in the hot sun distributing hand-knitted mittens to starving refugees, he would lie instead sound asleep in his bunk till nearly dusk.

You might have thought it was Major Thuddey's duty

to reprimand Mitar—as it was certainly Natya's mother's duty to reprimand her daughter: but Major Thuddey was more than a little afraid of Mitar. Major Thuddey was an honest man: but he was also, in the American sense, an Idealist: the good name of his Relief Fund and of the United States was dear to him. He deprecated very much the way his subordinates had of selling to the refugees for their own pockets stores they were supposed to distribute free—but to bring dishonour on his country by exposing the practice was a crime to so good a patriot quite unthinkable. It was consequently a matter of considerable anxiety to him to notice that Mitar, whose Idealism he had no reason to respect and who was not an American Citizen, was scrupulously honest in all his dealings. He felt (and rightly) that the Good Name of America was somehow imperilled by this honesty: and though he had not the acumen to realize just how Mitar was investing his renunciation of his present chances for the support of his old age—though he did not suspect the existence of Mitar's little sheaf of notes, nor the use he intended to put them to—yet he could not but feel that the presence of a man as honest as himself but without his saving grace of Idealism was somehow dangerous; and, if Mitar lay abed and did nothing—well, all the better.

But Natya's mother had no such reason for silence: she took an early opportunity of coming into Natya's room, and sitting on Natya's bed, and telling her in as calm a voice as possible that all was discovered: that the young man would certainly be shot at the first opportunity. By this means she hoped to terrify the child into a complete confession that would include the identity of her lover: for all was *not* discovered: the old lady had not the least idea who

the nightly visitant was: and it is difficult to arrange for the unobtrusive assassination of a man you have not yet identified. The course of laying an ambush and shooting him under her daughter's window was to be avoided if possible, owing to the way tongues would certainly wag: a dead man at such a time and in such a place would quite belie the proverb, would tell a very obvious tale.

Now at the calm way her mother exploded her bomb Natya, who had all a child's belief in the intuitive omniscience of its mother, was nearly terrified out of her young life: and the Great Seal of Ragusa, that before had almost seemed to flutter like a live bird against her skin, suddenly seemed to crush through her flesh like a mill-stone. She was seized with a lively sense of the futility of ever attempting to hide anything from one's mother, who knows everything about one by light of nature. But fortunately this sad conviction did not prevent her lying to her mother with skill and coolness. Although having no hope whatever of success, she lied as a matter of principle. Her mother, who had started so calmly, not through calmness of nature, but because she had an unconscious appreciation of the value of crescendo when making a scene, gradually increased in fury and sound: and as her passion increased her discretion decreased: until Natya, while outwardly growing more and more stricken by her mother's wrath, inwardly became more and more elated: for she soon discovered that in the first place her mother did not know who her visitor was: and in the second that her father had not yet been told, but only was about to be. She resolved immediately that wild horses should not drag her lover's name from her; but at the same time

she realized what a valuable weapon it was, in making terms for herself; by mildness, tempered by maidenly grief and pity—by abandonment of all defiance, and promising always to reveal the great secret in a day or two—she might get the game into her own hands: for as long as they thought they were likely to worm her lover's name out of her, so long would they be unable to take drastic measures on her own person.

Quite suddenly, the storm ceased: long before it had run its natural course. Possibly there was enough foundation for Natya's belief in her mother's intuition for the latter to have realized that her wrath was not having the effect it appeared to have, but that inwardly Natya was greatly cheered by it. So she too dissolved in tears, and kissed her daughter very lovingly, and told her in a sad, melancholy way what rosy hopes she had for her future. This was more than poor Natya had bargained for: she was still a child in many ways, and it was difficult to harden herself against the fountain-head of all the love she had ever known: far harder than to harden herself against the same person when regarded simply as the fountain-head of Authority. However, for the time being she succeeded; and her mother left her at last, bearing away no more information than she brought with her. Indeed, she had only shown her own hand, and consequently had little hope even of taking the young man in an ambush: for she was sensible enough to realize that if Natya were locked up in an iron box and she sat on the lid day and night, the girl would still find some means of conveying a warning to her lover. And so she left, somewhat downcast, but subconsciously deter-

mined, if need should arise, to worry herself on to a sick-bed. If her little Natya could stand against that, she reflected, she was not her little Natya.

She did not consider that little Natya was no longer wholly and only *her* little Natya.

As she expected, Natya immediately set about sending a message to her lover, to warn him of the danger of coming to see her. "*Dear One,*" she began to compose in her head, "*you must never try and see me again, or you will certainly be shot.*" In her heart of hearts she was singularly well pleased: this was a love-affair with a vengeance! And then her blood ran cold: suppose her hero laughed at warnings, and came, and was shot dead from a window as cats are shot when they yowl in the night? And then her blood ran colder: suppose he took her warning, and never *did* come to see her again? Both possibilities were equally unthinkable; *ergo*, she would not think of them. She went on composing her message in her head.

She had wholly overlooked till this moment one sovereign fact. Wild horses certainly could not drag his name from her, for she did not know it! Among all the hundred thousand things she had said to him, she had entirely forgotten to ask him who he was. And therefore she could not send him a message: for she could hardly write a letter to be pinned up in the American Mess, a sort of Battalion Orders:

"Officers will cease to visit Natya Perunic by night, as arrangements have been made to assassinate them. . . ."

So, though her brain went round in her head like a wheel, no way of identifying him could she contrive. Well, it could not be helped: he must come once more, and take his

chance. After all, it was quite impossible that so glorious and wonderful a person as he was could be laid low by an ordinary bullet: love-stories simply do not end that way. And, at any rate, it removed the awful possibility of his *not* coming at all.

But Natya, with her mind full of these stupendous happenings and her heart bubbling over with its single stupendous emotion, little knew what a matter of touch-and-go it was whether she would ever see Mitar again. I have shown in an entirely convincing fashion how certain it was that these two should fall in love with each other. So convincing, indeed, were the arguments that Mitar never had the least doubt about it: it was, he realized, quite inevitable that he should fall in love with Natya: for he had a logical mind, as well as considerable experience of the subject, and always bowed to the dictates of his reason. Natya might fall in love without in the least knowing why: but for Mitar, who did know why and fully acquiesced in it, assurance was doubly sure. It was accordingly without the least hesitation that he flung himself into the affair, with absolute singleness of mind, absolute conviction of the stupendous nature of his own emotions. Each night, as he thrilled to the very core at the recital of his own devotion, it became more and more plain to him that he could not fail to be madly in love with this marvellous creature, whose passion for him was so wonderful and so complete. So that when his Heart every now and then protested somewhat grumpily that it was not in love with her in the least, his Head told it quite flatly that it did not know what it was talking about: that it was in love with her without knowing it: that it *knew* it was in love with her and was simply

being contrary: that outsiders see most of the game, and that it lay with Head, as an intelligent spectator, to decide whether Heart was in love, not with Heart itself at all: that presently Heart would be repenting its wilfulness in the flames of such a consuming passion as it had never felt before.

But still Heart protested, with all the obstinacy of which that organ is capable, that it was not in love with Natya Perunič.

Whereupon Head, realizing the futility of logical argument, tried to work upon Heart's feelings. It, Head, had done everything for Heart the latter could wish: had even sacrificed time that should have been given to the elaboration of that little note-book: had risked career, personal safety, —everything, in its readiness to follow the dictates of Heart: and now Heart repaid it by having no dictates at all!

But still Heart persisted that that was as it might be, but that it was not in love with Natya Perunič.

Very well then, said Head, your obstinacy has got us into the soup. For that we have between us worked the poor girl into a pretty state of passion there can be no doubt. An organ of your sensibility surely cannot propose that we should now desert her. All I ask of you is to suspend judgment. We owe it to her to go through with this business as we have begun and I have no doubt whatever that the time will come when you will thank me, when you will be madly in love with her, and will be extremely grateful that I have refused to listen to you now.

That is as it may be, replied Heart: the future is not my province and you can act as you like: my only duty is to record the state of my feelings at the present moment, and

the long and the short of it is, that I am not in love with Natya Perunič.

—It must not be supposed that this dialogue actually took place, or that Mitar argued it out clearly at all: it is simply an analysis for the reader's benefit of the generally uneasy state of mind in which he found himself; now deciding to carry her off to the other side of the world, now deciding never to go near her again; and absolutely refusing to admit to himself that he was not in love with Natya Perunič.

Moreover, it was only natural that to a man of his matured senses there should be something unsatisfactory in such a love-making, with the two persons as securely separated by the barrier of ten vertical feet of air as they would have been by ten horizontal feet of adamant.

It was therefore, as I have said, touch-and-go whether Natya would ever see her ardent lover again: just as it was touch-and-go whether *he* would ever see the light of day again if she did. But it was inevitable that in a man of Mitar's type, as the reader will have guessed from the details of his past and his future which I have given unselfishness should ultimately conquer: that the thought of leaving a girl so extremely lovely to pine for him unrequited would be ultimately put out of court. One must, on these occasions, occasionally sacrifice one's own feelings. Accordingly, before setting out he provided himself with a rope long enough and strong enough to overcome the ten-foot airy barrier he found so irksome; and resolved to see Natya Perunič once and for all.

The next night, then, found him once more at his place in the bushes, bubbling his devotions into the air like a

garden fountain, where they met and mingled with the sighs and protestations of the maiden so far over his head: for just as he found it quite impossible to tell her (so unselfish he was) that all he said was said, so to speak, through his hat, so Natya, in *her* unselfishness, found it quite impossible to shatter his happiness (and interrupt the flow) by rude news of the imminent personal danger to which it exposed him.

Mitar, with the whole night before him and a nice sense of the pleasures of anticipation, was in no hurry to broach his project: and so an hour passed, and still the rope remained coiled under his coat.

But at length he resolved to act: and without for a moment interrupting the scintillation of his love-making, uncoiled it, ready to throw.

And now at last little Natya leant from the window as far as she could, hands outstretched to catch the line: and Mitar stood below, in act to throw.

A large and quite unprepossessing hand appeared in the moonlight over Natya's head, and twined itself very firmly in her hair. One tug, one scream—and where before her arms and cheek had gleamed in the moonlight, now nothing was visible except the spouts of two rifles, that poked out a few inches from the sill like the little lead cistern-overflow pipes in the wall of an English villa. Nor were they long in discharging their accumulation of wrath into the garden: and very near that cat came, who had so long yowled unmolested through the night, to a mortal soaking.

But Mitar was more adapted to making quick decisions, acting on the merits of the situation without undue delay, than are most officials in charge of the distribution of chari-

table funds. At the first gleam of those fingers in the moonlight, Mitar, all his eloquence checked, was crawling away on his stomach through the shrubbery, dragging his ridiculous ten-foot tail wriggling behind him.

III

After this incident, it was only natural that Head should somewhat weaken in the opposition it raised to Heart. It is all very well to run risks when one is madly infatuated: but deliberately to get oneself shot in a shrubbery in the cause of an Unselfishness that amounted to little more than a point of punctilio is altogether absurd: while the sole very moderate personal satisfaction with which Mitar had intended to reward himself could be purchased in any town of considerable size with perfect safety for about four *lire*. And it only shows the perverseness of Heart, that it, too, began to weaken in its opposition to Head: that after a week of enforced separation it was no longer at all so firm in its conviction that it was not in the least in love with Natya Perunič.

However, in this contest of adaptability to the opposite point of view, it was Head which ultimately carried the day, being even more ready to give up the whole affair than Heart was to continue it. It is highly probable that the two lovers would never have seen each other again if it had not been for Zdenka: who now enters the story in the rôle of Fairy Godmother, or *Diabolus ex machina*, whichever way you like to look at it. Zdenka was the assistant in the photographic studio which some enterprising person had established in Dobruca. It was only a small wooden shanty,

but excellently equipped: being furnished with a red plush sofa, a plaster balustrade with no behind to it, a white calico screen, and a monochrome landscape background of Fifth Avenue.

There was, of course, no camera. On its first establishment it had actually done a little business with the American Relief-workers: but after they had been photographed in every possible position, and in every combination and permutation of grouping, business languished. Most of the villagers, after being photographed at one age in one position, made that last a lifetime. In consequence, the proprietor had been compelled to dismount his machine from its complicated stand, and now earned a precarious living by touring the country, photographing atrocities for sale to the propaganda departments of all the belligerent governments; and also by photographing politicians surrounded by thousands of their supporters, which they bought by the gross at little more than cost price to distribute among their opponents. Meanwhile Zdenka remained in charge of the studio: nominally, at any rate, to make appointments for the proprietor, if ever he should happen to pass that way.

It will therefore be seen that Zdenka, being a New Woman with a profession of her own, possessed a great deal more freedom of movement than a nicely brought up girl like Natya would ever be allowed. Hitherto, Natya had felt nothing but contempt for those hoydens who struggled in the outer darkness of life, instead of vegetating in the inner light of seclusion: her attitude towards Zdenka had been friendly, but decidedly superior; but now she found herself greatly envying that freedom which formerly had so shocked her. For it must not be imagined that having

her hair nearly pulled out by the roots was the chief of the unpleasantnesses she had to endure during the next few days: and if her family failed to proceed to extreme measures, it was only for two reasons. In the first place, they had still failed to identify her lover, and still hoped to worm the secret out of her: in the second, it was less than a month now from the date of her wedding, and it is unbecoming in a bride to be black and blue.

Although this matter of her wedding certainly saved Natya from a good deal of physical discomfort, she nevertheless found herself anticipating it with more and more annoyance. Under ordinary circumstances it would have seemed to her quite in the course of nature that she should be married to a man she had never seen: but now she found herself regarding the prospect almost with aversion.

For the betrothal customs of Western and Eastern Europe, although they coincide in the main, have one important difference. It is a matter of philosophy, the opposition of the Idealistic and the Realistic. In Eastern Europe, when a girl is still a very small child, her parents choose for her a husband, and the betrothal is fixed: and this may be said for the plan, that if the girl has never seen her intended husband, at least her parents have. But in Western Europe, while she is still a child, or even before she is born, her parents choose for her an imaginary husband, and, in their minds, betroth her to him quite as irrevocably as do Balkan parents: an Idea, say, of a sober business man, handsome but steady, clever at his work but without any taint of Inquiry in his mind. So that in Western Europe, when the child-betrothal takes place, not only has the girl never seen her intended husband, but her parents have not either.

In Natya's case, it was a prominent director of the Eskomptne Banke at Zagreb to whom she was betrothed: a man of quite respectable means, and some intelligence, and a fair allowance of years, called Dr. Pedar Srdič: and it was very wrong of Natya to repine against so excellent a husband.

Nevertheless, an almost unheard-of project began to suggest itself to her. She would run away with Mitar to America.

For several days after that disgraceful incident of course she was not allowed to see anyone at all: but it was not long before she obtained leave to see her friend Zdenka: and it was not long before Zdenka, having with difficulty identified him, began to pass on mysterious messages to Mitar. They proved very disturbing to his peace of mind: for he had hardly come to the decision never to see Natya again when those devoted little communications from her began to leak through, telling him how she languished, what she suffered for his sake: begging him to come and see her once again, if only *once:* messages which almost fired him to forget his new resolution. But each time when he almost decided to go, the memory of those two little overflow pipes projecting from the wall was too much for him: try as he would, he could not go. Meanwhile, he was quite sensible of a new danger: if he did not go, Zdenka might suspect him of being a coward, and a deceiver: and if she got angry with him, she might give away the whole affair to Natya's parents—which would be disastrous. In consequence, he took the most elaborate pains with his excuses, and made them so specious and convincing that for a time they failed to

arouse the suspicions not only of the ingenuous Natya, but even of the more worldly-wise Zdenka.

It is improbable, however, that this could have lasted: the crisis would have been bound to be precipitated, were it not for a fortunate occurrence. A fortnight before her marriage, Natya got leave to go and be photographed. The proprietor was spending a few hours in Dobruca to collect some plates which Zdenka had developed: and an appointment was arranged. Zdenka hurried with the news to Mitar. So he was concealed in a cupboard, ready to step out the moment the proprietor left. Small wonder if Natya were even more nervous than girls usually are, when they pose for their photographs—knowing that Mitar was watching her through the keyhole of the tall cupboard in the corner. As a matter of fact, he was not: the cupboard was so tightly sealed that he put his nose, not his eye, to the only aperture.

But at last the sitting was over, and the proprietor bundled out of the studio, and Zdenka on guard at the door: and on the red plush sofa, witnessed only by the plaster balustrade that had no behind and the faint, fantastic shadow of Fifth Avenue, Mitar and Natya conducted their first proper love-making.

As soon as she was able to sufficiently to collect her wits, Natya broke to Mitar the news that she intended to elope with him. He was to come once more with his rope to her window, but in perfect silence this time: she would climb down, and together they would fly to America.

When she first told him of her imminent marriage, he was torn by conflicting emotions, unable to decide whether he was more desolated to lose her or more rejoiced at this

ready-made solution of a position grown impossible: but when she suggested elopement, his mind was made up at once: duly and firmly married to Dr. Srdič she must be! This did not, of course, prevent him welcoming the notion with every expression of joy: and by the time their short hour was up, he had promised to make all arrangements for flight and to call for Natya within the next three days.

Needless to say, he did not.

Now for the first time Zdenka began to reproach him. But there were so many difficulties, he urged: and plenty of time, plenty of time: Natya would not be married for a whole week: or later, for three days: at length, even:

"Why, she will not be married till to-morrow! What more suitable night than to-night to carry her off?"

Zdenka shook her head, unappeased. She had by now more than grave doubts of Mitar's intentions: she urged him at least to go and see the poor girl once more, even if he could not save her from the imminent ceremony.

"Why, of course I shall," he answered. "I shall go to-night, with my rope, and have a car waiting . . . after to-night, you will never hear of either of us again!"

But Zdenka still shook her head: and Mitar, feeling himself to be quite unconvincing, went out and got very drunk indeed, in order to forget all about it.

IV

The wedding procession started out the next morning at six: and Natya, who had sat the whole night by her window in growing despair, looked the most pinched and peaked and hollow-eyed and unhappy young bride. Dr. Srdič was sec-

ond cousin to a bishop, and so it was towards the little cathedral city of Vojvdo that the wedding procession set out so early, laughing and chaffing, with the prospect of half a day's drive through the mountains ahead of them, and much merrymaking at the end of it, and a return in the evening. They passed up the street of Dobruca, the highly decorated little carts jingling as they went, the men calling and guffawing, the women singing and giggling, the bride quietly sobbing to herself. They passed right under Mitar's window: but he was far too sound asleep to be woken by so slight a disturbance. He slept on, the deep and innocent sleep of the intoxicated.

When he did wake, his head was awful. It was nine o'clock. The blinding sun shone straight in at his window. He sat up, clutching at his brows. (It is an unjust God who has decreed that man should purchase oblivion and irresponsibility at such a price.) His skull seemed to come to pieces in his hands, like a cup in the grasp of a housemaid. It was agony. It felt as if someone with a Victorian sense of humour had wittily attempted to saw his head in two while he slept: and, being surprised at the task, had left his saw wedged in the cleft.

Mitar pressed his hands to his eyeballs and staggered across the room, groping for his belt and boots. Then out into the blinding street and across to the café, where he sank into a little green chair, and ordered a whole bottle of šljivovica—by way of a hair of the dog that had bitten him.

Ten o'clock. Natya would have started four hours ago.

For a moment the pain lulled, and when it lulled he began to remember, which was highly annoying. He tackled the šljivovica seriously, determined that the return of the wedding

party should find him as paralytically unconscious and incapable as had its departure.—But, after all, why should he worry? Brazen little minx! It had all been on her side, she had entrapped him: he had never been in love with her in the least: and hadn't he nearly got himself shot, just to gratify her whims? His hair bristled uncomfortably at the thought of her two fierce brothers, their incredibly long moustaches, those two little overflowing pipes. *Question:* What right has a girl to fall in love with a man? *Answer:* None, if it is going to cause him danger and inconvenience.

That gave place to a more placid mood, in which he congratulated himself on the part he had played: management of a difficult situation which for skill, tact, and moral rectitude could hardly be excelled. He really came out of it all very well.

Gradually his headache softened under the bite of the spirit: and soon everything receded from him in a beatific way, just as the world of sense *ought* to recede from a spiritual man. He gradually melted into the Infinite—already his bodily senses were left behind, or at any rate all mixed up: so that the little green tables of the café only penetrated to him as a tinkling arpeggio to the blaring bass of the sunlight, the booming sky outside: while the rattle of a passing bullock-cart was translated into a series of vivid flashes of colour, and the discomfort of the rickety chair he sat on smelt bitter in his nostrils.

But something was pushing him, shoving up against him, prodding him in his Nirvana. That was monstrous! He pulled himself together, just enough to ascertain through which of his senses the attack was really directed. Finally,

he traced it to his ears: yes, someone was shouting at him. And his bottle had been removed.

With great difficulty he focused his eyes on the scene around him: and at last discovered Zdenka, standing over him, covering him with abuse from head to foot.

But she did more than that. Seizing a carafe of iced water from a table near by, she poured half of it over his head: and then deliberately tipped the rest, lumps of ice and all, down the back of his neck, holding away the collar of his tunic with her hand.

The remedy was drastic, but it certainly made him better able to listen to what she had to say. He even succeeded in asking her what the devil she meant by it.

"You wicked liar, making poor little Natya fall in love with you! *You*, to promise to run away with her, and then to sit there drinking like an owl while the poor child is being married to old Srdič! You, to call yourself a brigand! You, to call yourself an officer! You, to call yourself a male man at all!"

"But, my dear little girl, what is all the fuss? You don't dare to suggest I'm a coward, that I'm not going to run away?"

"But, you great embroidered he-liar, she's half-way to Vojvdo by now!"

"There's plenty of time, my child, plenty of time. She won't be married for a couple of hours yet. Must have a drink, before starting!"

"But she's twenty miles ahead of you by now!"

"There's plenty of time! . . . Overtakings are in the Hands of God!"

He staggered out of his chair: he had caught sight of one

of the Relief Fund Fords, which Major Thuddey had left standing outside the mess with the engine running. As he climbed into the driver's seat he turned to repeat solemnly to the astonished Zdenka:

"*In the Hands of God . . .*"

Then he accidentally trod on the gear-pedal, and began zigzagging erratically up the street in low gear, like a lamed rocket, clinging side-ways to the steering-wheel.

What the ice down his back had begun, the fresh air continued. By the time he had destroyed a fruit-stall, and left a mudguard as a sort of pious offering on the corner of the church, he was beginning to drive fairly creditably: at any rate, he sat facing in the right direction, and had succeeded in getting into top gear. Moreover, he had all the drunk man's feeling of confidence in his own skill: he felt that never had he driven so well before. He also had the drunk man's luck: for he drove as hard as he could pelt and missed destruction by inches, yet, for the present at any rate, missed it.

Soon he was eating up the miles to Vojvdo: and all the fire in his blood was stirred at his romantic quest. *Natya! Natya!* Her name sang in his ears like a choir of birds. Her lovely face danced in front of him all up the road. Gone was his terror for her villainous brothers, her father, the whole pack of them! He would snatch her from them, carry off his beloved from the altar steps: true love and constancy, youth and the beautiful dreams of youth should conquer in the end, as they always conquered. His name would go down to posterity among the names of Great Lovers: his exploit would be celebrated in poems and plays, along with the heroic elopements of antiquity.

As, indeed, leaving out the little matter of his mental indecision, of which no one need ever know: leaving out the part played by Zdenka with the carafe of iced water, and the amount of stimulant he had consumed before starting on his heroic expedition, and various details of his private life (such as the little note-book), all of which a romantic writer with an eye to a good story would quite certainly suppress: taking the plain, staring facts of the story and asking no awkward questions about mental processes: employing, in short, an artist's undoubted Right of Selection—there was no reason whatever why it should not.

Who knows why Paris ran off with Helen, or what crossed Leander's mind as he swam the Hellespont? Who would be fool enough not to accept these stories at their face value, when their face value was so stirring? Then who would dare to suggest that Mitar, who had braved death to visit his Natya, and now charged recklessly across the mountains to snatch her from the altar steps, was not the most romantic lover of them all?

For it must not be imagined that there was anything comic in the turn affairs had taken. Mitar might be drunk, but he was not ignorant of the difficulty of his task: and being accustomed to danger, he had also a remarkable power of forcing his mind to sober itself when action was necessary. To carry Natya off from her own house would have been comparatively easy: to carry her off at the church door, when all the wedding guests would have rifles, and would certainly shoot him at sight if they had the least inkling that he was Natya's anonymous lover, was a very serious matter, requiring all the daring and all the coolness he could muster. That it was *l'amour propre* rather than *l'amour* which prompted

the adventure did not affect its *dangerousness* a whit. Mitar was no romantic townling, battened on picture-plays and fiction magazines, he was a man who all his life had lived face to face with danger: and if that gave him the necessary practice and skill with which alone such an enterprise could be successfully carried out, it also meant that he knew very well how difficult it all was. As he drove his Ford for all it was worth in the direction of Vojvdo he knew, with a certainty no mere amateur adventurer could have had, how slender were the chances of his ever coming back alive.

And yet he was still so drunk that he could hardly cling to the wheel.

Poor Natya! She had almost given up hope. As the cathedral drew nearer, hope sank lower: she began to envisage the old bishop as if he were some kind of inexorable ogre. Presently the whole party stopped at a little wayside inn, for lunch; dived under the low, vine-covered door, and grouped themselves formally round the bare trestle tables. Natya tried to eat with the rest: but all the time her eye was fixed on the door, or on the window. She hardly heard what they said to her. *He cometh not!*

And yet, what would be the good? Could he venture right into the lion's den?

A long-drawn-out grinding squeak proclaimed that a car had pulled up outside: and presently the door was darkened by the figure of an American officer. Natya dropped her spoon, gazing a moment with popping eyes. Then she recovered herself. No one had noticed. Mitar came in and sat down in a corner, and ordered food.

Natya could not bear to look at him. He had come! But why had he come? Was it to gaze his last at her? Or was

it to carry her off? And why was he pretending to be drunk? Was that a piece of cunning on his part?

So the meal went on: the wedding party eating heartily, Natya eating nothing at all. Mitar eating as well as the state of his stomach would allow.

It was over. The wedding party adjourned to their carts. Mitar did not move: he sat there, as if there was no hurry: and never once looked at Natya.

So that *looking* could not be his purpose in coming.

It was not till they were mounting once more into their seats that they discovered how near an accident they must have been. The axle-pin had come out of the wheel of one of the carts, the wheel itself had been wrenched crooked by the strain. The whole party conferred over it a while, and came to the conclusion that nothing could be done: the vehicle must be left behind. But all the other carts were packed: what about its passengers?

They looked round, and there was the American officer's motor-car; and inside the inn the American officer was dawdling over his lunch.

The solution was obvious; so old Perunič, Natya's father, took the negotiations on his own shoulders. He wandered aimlessly back into the inn: began an aimless conversation with the innkeeper; aimlessly trod on Mitar's toe, and overwhelmed himself with apologies. From that to an equally aimless conversation with the stranger was a short step: and purely in order to make conversation, he recited the story of their mishap. Mitar, who knew perfectly well what was coming, was laconic, and no more helpful than necessary: and it must be confessed that though he expressed sympathy at the mishap, inwardly it caused him little surprise. . . .

So, when the moment was ripe, he suggested that, as he also was going to Vojvdo to buy eggs for the Relief Fund, could he give any of them a lift? Would the bride and her mother honour him?

The old man was grateful and astonished: such an idea would never have entered his head, but since the nobleman was so kind . . .

He went out to tell the others of his success: and Natya, with as little haste as she could contrive, began to climb down again from her seat. Meanwhile they were stripping the derelict vehicle of its decorations, and draping the old Ford in proper bridal manner, to take its place in the procession: while Mitar stood in the door of the inn with a bored and superior, if still rather intoxicated, air.

All were ready to start: all but the bride's mother, who still sat in her cart. So they explained to her that she was to ride in the car. Now, whether her famous intuition had begun to work, or whether it was sheer fright, I do not know: but she flatly refused. She never had ridden in a car, and she never would ride in a car: they were inventions of the devil as well as being highly unsafe: and to be terrified out of her life on the day of her daughter's wedding was not at all her idea of pleasure. Why, she would hardly feel Natya was properly married if the girl rode to her wedding in such a thing! (As, indeed, was highly probable.) In short, she refused outright: and there was nothing for it but for Natya to climb down yet again, and back into the cart: and instead of being able to carry off his lady, Mitar had to be content to take his place meekly in her wedding procession, with four of the bridegroom's caterwauling younger

brothers in the car beside him. So do the plans, even of Heroic Lovers, gang all awry.

How often it is that our patron saint looks after us in a way that at first makes us livid with rage—only afterwards we realize his kindly offices, and are properly grateful! As they left the little inn, Mitar inwardly abused his patron by every name his spiritual tongue could curl round. But as they neared Vojvdo, sobriety gradually returned to him, and he was overcome with astonishment at the part he had set out to play. *He,* to run off with another man's affianced bride! And she a girl with whom he was not in love in the least! All because of the sharp tongue of a wretched photographer's assistant. He thanked his saint with proper fervour, as they entered the narrow streets of Vojvdo, for saving him from so monstrous and so extremely unsafe an act: and he deposited the wedding guests at the door of the cathedral with all unction, promising to call for them in a couple of hours, while he set off to the market to buy two gross of excusatory eggs.

If one were buying two gross of eggs for oneself in the market of Vojvdo, two hours would certainly not be enough for the necessary bargaining: but buying them with public money was a different matter, and in less than thirty minutes they were all stowed in the bedizened Ford, and Mitar found himself with nothing to do. For a moment he thought of going to the cathedral to see the wedding; but his innate tact revolted against this. Moreover, he reflected, the actual ceremony would be over by now. Then he thought longingly of the wedding feast: so longingly that he turned into a little Gostilna, determined to celebrate the occasion of

Natya's wedding by himself, over a bottle or two of his favourite liqueur.

But as the flames of the habitual šljivovica mounted to his head, they wrought a decided change of mind. In the first place, it is well known that intoxication, like sleep, loosens the tongue of the subconscious: and deep in his subconscious, however positively Head and Heart might agree to the contrary, there lurked a certain regret for the lovely girl (call it love or not as you like, for the stirrings of the subconscious are used to hard names, by now). In the second place, a man may get drunk overnight and drunk again the morning after without much happening: but if he deliberately gets drunk the following afternoon as well, something is bound to give, somewhere: discretion and reason go completely by the board, and whether he wins the Victoria Cross, or finds himself sentenced to several years' hard labour, or matter for the sexton, will be purely a question of the circumstances in which he is situated.

All this Mitar should have known, and gone easy with the bottle: but he did not go easy, and that is how it came to pass that his ambition to become the subject of song and story was fulfilled. By the time he went to pick up the returning wedding guests they were fairly uproariously drunk: but *he* was drunk with a superlative drunkenness, as different from theirs as cheese from chalk: a cold, mad drunkenness, that left him fairly well able to walk and talk, but cut off all memory and all prescience as with a knife: he had no Past and no Future, only a vivid Present with which he grappled with the energy of a tiger. I have seen a man in this state make his teeth meet through another

man's leg: I have myself walked round a high building on a lead gutter that sagged in festoons under my weight. But it is rare, this true Bacchic frenzy: and only those who have seen it can realize how far removed from the ordinary puerile bravado of intoxication it is.

But of all this Mitar, as is the way in such cases, gave no hint till the moment was ripe. They were on the homeward journey, the narrow road passing between the rock and a terrific precipice. Mitar had drawn a little ahead of the others with his four young men, and as he rounded a bend he suddenly drew up. Then he pulled out a couple of automatics, and covering his astonished passengers with one hand, trained the other on the bend behind him; determined to shoot, if necessary, the whole wedding party, thirty or forty of them.

As the first cart came in sight, he fired. His aim, always good, was now deadly. Three men dropped. The horses were mad with confusion: other men sprang to their heads to force them back into cover. Mitar fired again. A rifle volley replied: but they aimed high in order to miss their relatives in the back seat. And Mitar volleyed another three or four shots. Then silence: his clip was empty. He lifted his other gun, alternately firing and covering the terrified four, all the while feeling desperately in his pocket for a spare clip to charge his empty gun. He was not firing aimlessly, be it understood: Natya, her mother, and the other women were as safe as they had been when in the cathedral itself: but one man after another dropped on the narrow road. Only Dr. Srdič himself, lying flat on his stomach at his bride's feet, Mitar could not reach.

By the time he had fired his last shot, the two families of Perunič and Srdič were both reduced by about one half, but if anything the family of Perunič had suffered most. In order to redress the balance, Mitar loosened the brake, and deliberately drove his car with himself and his four passengers straight over the edge of the cliff.

But his patron saint, who had formerly saved him from indiscretion, now saved him in indiscretion. As the car heeled over sideways he was flung out, and somehow caught with both hands at a tamarisk bush some four feet below the edge. But the bestreamered car and the four young men and the two gross of eggs turned over and over and over on their eight-hundred-foot drop into the ravine beneath. As he hung there, Mitar bitterly regretted those eggs. . . . But then, he reflected, one cannot make so grand an omelette without the breaking of eggs.

As the astonished wedding party craned their necks over the cliff, they were just in time to see the Ford, now grown minute and distant, come finally to rest. But they did not see a pair of hands twined firmly in a tamarisk bush a few feet below their noses.

Presently they went on their way—considerably chastened in their merrymaking, it is true; but it must not be imagined that the incident seemed to them so unusual, or of quite so much importance, as it would to the guests at one of our Western weddings. Only Dr. Srdič himself, who, from his many years as a Zagrab banker, had grown used to ways of comparative security, considered it a matter of great import. He had always wondered what to do with his four turbulent younger brothers.

V

It must be confessed, against Natya's count, that she did not treat her husband with that politeness or consideration one civilized being owes to another: let alone a wedded wife to her husband. Once she had ensconced herself in her bedroom, she produced a small but very sharp stiletto of Sheffield steel, and told him she would kill him if he came inside the door. She was wild with grief and love at Mitar's heroic end, and determined to have her cry out in private, without the intrusion of a husband.

Pedar Srdič was not very much impressed by her stiletto, for there are more ways than one of disarming a woman: but his residence in Zagreb, and contact with that Western world whose outpost it was, had taught him that the marriage customs of his native country were more than a little barbarous: and though he had followed them in form (for he was a true conservative), he was quite ready, now that Natya and he were married, to give her time for them to get acquainted—even to go through an abridged form of courtship—in deference to Western opinion. He was quite prepared to let her have her own wilful way; say, for three days, by which time, if she did not surrender willingly, his conscience would no longer reproach him for taking his rights by force: one day for them to get to know each other, one for him to make love to her, and one for her to fall in love with him: it was a generous allowance.

Meanwhile Natya sat on her bed day and night, without food or sleep, nursing her little steel imp, with which she more than once decided to kill herself. Of this Srdič had no ink-

ling: for it had not occurred to Natya's mother—let alone her husband, who, of course, had not been told—to connect the uncertain temper of the American officer in the Ford with Natya's secret love-affair. They all put it down to the natural vagaries of a man who had taken too much to drink, and thought no more about it.

Two days passed, and time brought no alleviation to Natya's sorrow. Two days, and still she loved Mitar, still mourned his death in the abysm of despair. Pedar's programme had to be abandoned, owing to her peevish conduct; for when he came to the door she used to go to the window and threaten to throw herself down into the stone courtyard below, if he so much as entered the room. Love-making, and even acquaintance, were thus indefinitely postponed: till presently Pedar lost his temper and told her that if she could not even treat him with common politeness she should get no more law, but be strapped to the bed.

Natya, being no more moved by his threats than his cajoleries, determined at last to make an end of herself: life without Mitar was unbearable, life with Pedar was unbearable, life must end. Perhaps she might be allowed to meet her lover in purgatory: indeed, her only dread was that so angelic a man could scarcely be kept there for more than a week or two at most: she shuddered to think of the æons she might have to spend there alone.

And so the story winds to a tragic close, for Mitar, that she believed dead, was alive and well: and even now making plans for her ultimate abduction.

There were many reasons why he had not acted at once, on his return to Dobruca. In the first place, it took a couple of days' sleep to restore him to passable health. In the second,

he had to explain to Major Thuddey the loss of the car and the eggs—but Major Thuddey was so used, by now, to fantastic explanations of the "loss" of government property that it was not a very difficult matter. And in the third place, it took him a little while to make up his mind. But he soon realized that what he had begun he must finish: that the new respect with which Zdenka treated him would be forfeit if he confined his exploits to a mere meat omelette, and did not carry the girl off in the end at all.

So at last he started off for Srdič's country house, bowling along in yet another stolen Ford with a rope-ladder under the seat. His heart as as full of hope as Natya's of despair. But the scene, with its fitful, moon-splashed sky, was all set for tragedy: for the night she had finally chosen for suicide was the selfsame night he had fixed on for their elopement: and as her lover drove carelessly through the darkness, Natya lay on the great walnut bed for the last time in her life, dressed in her bridal gown, feeling with the point of her stiletto for the right spot between her ribs.

The sudden ping of a pebble on her window so startled her that she actually pricked herself . . . but it was too late. There came another ping. Hardly knowing what she was doing, she rose and opened the casement. Out of the darkness below floated the incredible voice of her beloved.

Her long hair rose away from her head like a mane: the little scratch on her breast smarted. Was it so simple then: was she already dead? Had he risen from the grave to summon her to join him there? Then the end of a rope-ladder floated up into sight, and mechanically she caught it. That reassured her. One does not need a ladder to descend into the grave.

Mitar and Natya were together at last; the last barrier down, driving away through the night, their happiness at last in their own hands: Natya full of love and trust in her hero, Mitar full of satisfaction in the accomplishment of his task, and a growing uneasiness as to what should be done with the girl now he had got her: for that they were irrevocably committed to each other he could not deny. Of one thing only he was absolutely certain: that he was not in the least in love with Natya Srdič.

Most assuredly the story was winding to a tragic close: gone was even that little thread of Sheffield steel by which it had so nearly been avoided.

Mitar drove straight to the house of a married sister of his, who lived some forty miles from Dobruca: and just had time to dump Natya at the door and drive like Hell back to his quarters, if he was to be in before it was light. But he knew very well that could be only a temporary expedient.

VI

When Natya's flight was discovered, Dr. Srdič was annoyed almost beyond words. It was not merely the loss of his newly wed wife, for her beauty hardly compensated for her uncompromising temper. It was the social consequences which so exercised him.

Dr. Srdič, as I have shown, was a man of humane and advanced views, caught in the toils of a conservative etiquette, against which he had not the courage to revolt. Now immemorial etiquette dictated that in a case like this the injured husband should telegraph for his wife's nearest male relations;

and on their arrival should avenge the insult that had been offered him by shooting them dead. Etiquette was equally firm that the unhappy father and brother should accept the invitation, as if they were ignorant of its import: and allow themselves to be shot with expressions of polite, if fictitious, surprise. Then, and not till then, the ball was open, and that mortal catch-as-catch-can called a blood-feud would begin between the two families until one or other was exterminated.

Now, it may well be imagined that an enlightened and peaceable banker like Dr. Srdič was much embarrassed at the demands made of him by this social code: little as he wished to shoot old Perunič and his sons, he had even less desire to expose himself to the subsequent bullets of their relations—especially since the loss of his four younger brothers, whose usefulness he now for the first time recognized. He spent several sleepless nights trying to think of a way out: but there was no way out: etiquette was inexorable. With a heavy heart, therefore, he sent the wire: and then sat down to clean an old rusty rifle that he had not handled since he was a boy.

If Dr. Srdič was reluctant to send the wire, it was nothing to the despondency of the Perunič family on its receipt. If Dr. Srdič had debated for three nights before sending it, they debated for six before replying.

But it is a sign of true breeding to know when to waive etiquette: and where the banker had failed, they succeeded. They found a way by which honour would be satisfied: and instead of accepting the invitation for himself and his sons, old Perunič sent his wife and daughters-in-law.

At this no one was more overjoyed than Srdič himself: for

he was under no obligation to shoot the women: instead, they were able to sit down quietly together and hold a family parliament.

It was Natya's mother who put two and two together, and confessed the story of Natya's clandestine visitor, and finally drew the thread through the irascible American officer (of whose miraculous escape they had just heard) to her ultimate disappearance.

It was now Srdič's plain duty to set off for Dobruca and shoot Mitar in the street.

But so far had he wandered from the paths of the strict morality of his fathers, that he was singularly loath even to do this. Degenerate times, indeed, when a husband could so shirk his responsibilities! The position, he explained, was extremely difficult. He had, what they of course had not, some knowledge of international affairs, and he assured the eager women that if he were to shoot, under whatever provocation, an American officer, and more especially an officer engaged in the charitable relief of their country, there would be, diplomatically speaking, the devil to pay. The Americans, he explained, are a people with a very weak moral sense, and, so far from recognizing the justice of his action, would be certain not only to hang him, but to visit their wrath on the entire country-side. Even if he himself escaped, the catholic outpouring of their wrath would only be all the fiercer: the whole nation would be made to suffer for it, if he allowed himself the luxury of following the dictates of his conscience.

Difficult as the women found it to realize that a Great People could be so unenlightened, so lost to all sense of moral fitness, they had to admit that in questions of the outside

world they knew very much less than Pedar. They had to accept his judgment.

Then there was only one thing to be done. They must call in the bishop. He, the Bishop of Vojvdo, Srdič's cousin, who had officiated at the ceremony: it was for him to visit the American (for they were unaware how slender were Mitar's claims to that title) and to reason with him. It only shows how far gone they were in laxity, how quickly and harmfully the smallest breach of etiquette widens, that they should be so easily driven to have recourse to Reason.

All this time, of course, Mitar went about in a state of double uneasiness. He was extremely worried as to what was to be done with Natya: and he was not at all sure that he might not be shot at any hour of the day or night.

Then came the news that the bishop wished to see him, and, in some trepidation, he went. At first it seemed incredible that the enemy should have been reduced to so mild a form of retaliation as mere talk: but that this was the case the old man made clear.

"My son," he began, "you are in danger of Hell; you are living in adultery with another man's wife."

Mitar, with an air of great innocence, asked: "Whose?"

"With Natya, the wife of Dr. Pedar Srdič."

Mitar's countenance expressed relief: it was untrue, he explained: Mme. Srdič was staying in the mountains with a married sister of his, and he had not himself been near the place.

The bishop had to admit that this was true, and that it was hardly the conduct of the usual adulterer.

"At any rate," he went on, "you are conniving at keeping a married woman forcibly from her husband."

"I am not," said Mitar, "for, as Srdič himself will tell you, she won't go within ten miles of him."

The old man was not used to being answered back. He decided to clinch the matter.

"Well, my son, whatever you are doing, you have got to stop it."

But Mitar was by no means a coward. He explained, gently and respectfully, that he had no intention of stopping it.

The old man was overcome by amazement.

"Then, what *do* you intend to do?"

That was the one question Mitar could not easily answer. But in a flash he made up his mind:

"I intend to marry her!"

"But"—the bishop gasped—"she is married already!"

"True," said Mitar gently, "she has been married according to the rites of the Church: but according to the Constitution of January last, it is only the civil ceremony which is valid in law: and the civil ceremony had not, in this case, yet taken place. *I* shall depart with her to Belgrade, and marry her in a registry office!"

The bishop shook with rage.

"But do you imagine that such a crime would be tolerated? Do you think, when the law was framed, it was ever thought such a situation would arise?—It was simply to ensure the proper registration of marriages, impossible otherwise in a State where there are so many religions— Why, it is an insult to Mother Church, a downright insult, sir!"

Mitar leant back, and his expression was certainly insulting.

"Yes," he said, "I am afraid it will be a little awkward for Mother Church. What will she do about it?"

"You would be excommunicated . . . but the crime cannot be allowed to be committed!"

"I am not much worried by the prospect of excommunication, and I certainly intend to carry out my proposition as soon as I can get three days' leave. I repeat, what will Mother Church do about it?"

And then, before the bishop could reply, Mitar leant forward and continued:

"There is only *one* thing she can do, if the so-called insult is to be avoided: you must annul the former marriage! Find out that you made a mistake, that Natya was never properly married to Srdič at all! Then she and I can be married by Church and State both: and no insult, no awkward precedent, will have occurred."

Without a word the bishop rose and left the room. For nine sleepless nights he tried to discover a way out . . . degenerate days, indeed, when morality, etiquette, even the Church, could be openly defied!

He found none. The only thing that he found was a flaw in the ceremony that he had himself conducted. He had to break it to Srdič that he and Natya had never been properly married at all.

At which the good banker heaved a sigh of relief: for now he was free of the whole affair—unless the pig-headed old Perunič should take it into his head to shoot him for living with his daughter when they were not properly married!

On the whole, it seemed best to avoid all complications by returning at once to Zagreb.

And so the last obstacle was down, and the romantic story of Natya and Mitar, which already had begun to circulate through the market-places in the mouths of ballad-singers

and story-tellers, ended at the altar, to which Natya was led for the second time in a month. Compared with it, the stories of Paris and Helen or of Hero and Leander paled: it was told and sung with such a wealth of detail, such fervour, such gallantry, such romance, such bravery, such exaltation of the divine spirit of love, as never were heard in any story before: in short, it was told exactly as Natya herself believed it all to have happened: and as I should have believed it to have happened, if the story had been told me by Natya herself or even by some outsider—by anyone except Mitar Lochinvárovič himself, in the little Trieste wine-shop, when he was too drunk to remember to be discreet.

But the tragic ending? The shattering of all poor little Natya's dreams and illusions? The perpetual exasperation of Mitar, forced to pretend love in the glare of publicity to a woman for whom he did not care two pins? The horror of an innocent girl, when she discovered what manner of man he was?

I have said that the ways of love are inscrutable: that no man can prophesy them. Mitar, whose heart had remained hard when he had every reason to love Natya, was no sooner married to her, no sooner had every reason to hate and loathe her, than he saw her (as he put it) with clear eyes for the first time—in other words, fell as madly in love with her as she had with him. I cannot explain it, I can only state it. They had three children, to whom Mitar proved a devoted father: when he was forced for financial reasons to leave home, he carried the photograph taken of her on that memorable occasion in Zdenka's studio everywhere he went: and all the time he and I were together, he never failed to write

to her at least once a day—this, after they had been married for over five years.

It only shows how important it is, once one has set one's hand to the plough, never to look back on any excuse whatever.

A PAINFUL CASE [1]

by JAMES JOYCE

MR. JAMES DUFFY lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious. He lived in an old sombre house and from his windows he could look into the disused distillery or upwards along the shallow river on which Dublin is built. The lofty walls of his uncarpeted room were free from pictures. He had himself bought every article of furniture in the room, a black iron bedstead, an iron washstand, four cane chairs, a clothes-rack, a coal-scuttle, a fender and irons and a square table on which lay a double desk. A bookcase had been made in an alcove by means of shelves of white wood. The bed was clothed with white bedclothes and a black and scarlet rug covered the foot. A little hand-mirror hung above the washstand and during the day a white-shaded lamp stood as the sole ornament of the mantelpiece. The books on the white wooden shelves were arranged from below upwards according to bulk. A complete Wordsworth stood at one end of the lowest shelf and a copy of the *Maynooth Catechism,* sewn into the cloth cover of a notebook, stood at one end of the top shelf. Writing ma-

1 From *Dubliners,* by James Joyce, copyright, 1916, by B. W. Huebsch, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

terials were always on the desk. In the desk lay a manuscript translation of Hauptmann's *Michael Kramer,* the stage directions of which were written in purple ink, and a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time, and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for *Bile Beans* had been pasted on to the first sheet. On lifting the lid of the desks a faint fragrance escaped—the fragrance of new cedarwood pencils or of a bottle of gum or of an overripe apple which might have been left there and forgotten.

Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder. A mediæval doctor would have called him saturnine. His face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown tint of Dublin streets. On his long and rather large head grew dry black hair and a tawny moustache did not quite cover an unamiable mouth. His cheekbones also gave his face a harsh character; but there was no harshness in the eyes which, looking at the world from under their tawny eyebrows, gave the impression of a man ever alert to greet a redeeming instinct in others but often disappointed. He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances. He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense. He never gave alms to beggars and walked firmly, carrying a stout hazel.

He had been for many years cashier of a private bank in Baggot Street. Every morning he came in from Chapelizod by tram. At midday he went to Dan Burke's and took his lunch—a bottle of lager beer and a small trayful of arrowroot

biscuits. At four o'clock he was set free. He dined in an eating-house in George's Street where he felt himself safe from the society of Dublin's gilded youth and where there was a certain plain honesty in the bill of fare. His evenings were spent either before his landlady's piano or roaming about the outskirts of the city. His liking for Mozart's music took him sometimes to an opera or a concert: these were the only dissipations of his life.

He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed. He lived his spiritual life without any communion with others, visiting his relatives at Christmas and escorting them to the cemetery when they died. He performed these two social duties for old dignity's sake but conceded nothing further to the conventions which regulate the civic life. He allowed himself to think that in certain circumstances he would rob his bank but, as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled out evenly—an adventureless tale.

One evening he found himself sitting beside two ladies in the Rotunda. The house, thinly peopled and silent, gave distressing prophecy of failure. The lady who sat next him looked round at the deserted house once or twice and then said: "What a pity there is such a poor house tonight! It's so hard on people to have to sing to empty benches."

He took the remark as an invitation to talk. He was surprised that she seemed so little awkward. While they talked he tried to fix her permanently in his memory. When he learned that the young girl beside her was her daughter he judged her to be a year or so younger than himself. Her face, which must have been handsome, had remained intelligent. It was an oval face with strongly marked features. The eyes were very dark blue and steady. Their gaze began with

a defiant note but was confused by what seemed a deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris, revealing for an instant a temperament of great sensibility. The pupil reasserted itself quickly, this half-disclosed nature fell again under the reign of prudence, and her astrakhan jacket, moulding a bosom of a certain fulness, struck the note of defiance more definitely.

He met her again a few weeks afterwards at a concert in Earlsfort Terrace and seized the moments when her daughter's attention was diverted to become intimate. She alluded once or twice to her husband but her tone was not such as to make the allusion a warning. Her name was Mrs. Sinico. Her husband's great-great-grandfather had come from Leghorn. Her husband was captain of a mercantile boat plying between Dublin and Holland; and they had one child.

Meeting her a third time by accident he found courage to make an appointment. She came. This was the first of many meetings; they met always in the evening and chose the most quiet quarters for their walks together. Mr. Duffy, however, had a distaste for underhand ways and, finding that they were compelled to meet stealthily, he forced her to ask him to her house. Captain Sinico encouraged his visits, thinking that his daughter's hand was in question. He had dismissed his wife so sincerely from his gallery of pleasures that he did not suspect that anyone else would take an interest in her. As the husband was often away and the daughter out giving music lessons Mr. Duffy had many opportunities of enjoying the lady's society. Neither he nor she had had any such adventure before and neither was conscious of any incongruity. Little by little he entangled his thoughts with hers. He lent her books, provided her with ideas, shared his intellectual life with her. She listened to all.

Sometimes in return for his theories she gave out some fact of her own life. With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full: she became his confessor. He told her that for some time he had assisted at the meetings of an Irish Socialist Party where he had felt himself a unique figure amidst a score of sober workmen in a garret lit by an inefficient oil-lamp. When the party had divided into three sections, each under its own leader and in its own garret, he had discontinued his attendances. The workmen's discussions, he said, were too timorous; the interest they took in the question of wages was inordinate. He felt that they were hard-featured realists and that they resented an exactitude which was the produce of a leisure not within their reach. No social revolution, he told her, would be likely to strike Dublin for some centuries.

She asked him why did he not write out his thoughts. For what, he asked her, with careful scorn. To compete with phrasemongers, incapable of thinking consecutively for sixty seconds? To submit himself to the criticisms of an obtuse middle class which entrusted its morality to policemen and its fine arts to impresarios?

He went often to her little cottage outside Dublin; often they spent their evenings alone. Little by little, as their thoughts entangled, they spoke of subjects less remote. Her companionship was like a warm soil about an exotic. Many times she allowed the dark to fall upon them, refraining from lighting the lamp. The dark discreet room, their isolation, the music that still vibrated in their ears united them. This union exalted him, wore away the rough edges of his character, emotionalised his mental life. Sometimes he caught himself listening to the sound of his own voice. He thought

that in her eyes he would ascend to an angelical stature; and, as he attached the fervent nature of his companion more and more closely to him, he heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognised as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness. We cannot give ourselves, it said: we are our own. The end of these discourses was that one night during which she had shown every sign of unusual excitement, Mrs. Sinico caught up his hand passionately and pressed it to her cheek.

Mr. Duffy was much surprised. Her interpretation of his words disillusioned him. He did visit her for a week; then he wrote to her asking her to meet him. As he did not wish their last interview to be troubled by the influence of their ruined confessional they met in a little cakeshop near the Parkgate. It was cold autumn weather but in spite of the cold they wandered up and down the roads of the Park for nearly three hours. They agreed to break off their intercourse: every bond, he said, is a bond to sorrow. When they came out of the Park they walked in silence towards the tram, but here she began to tremble so violently that, fearing another collapse on her part, he bade her good-bye quickly and left her. A few days later he received a parcel containing his books and music.

Four years passed. Mr. Duffy returned to his even way of life. His room still bore witness of the orderliness of his mind. Some new pieces of music encumbered the music-stand in the lower room and on his shelves stood two volumes by Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *The Gay Science*. He wrote seldom in the sheaf of papers which lay in his desk. One of his sentences, written two months after his last interview with Mrs. Sinico, read: Love between man and man is

impossible because there must not be sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse. He kept away from concerts lest he should meet her. His father died; the junior partner of the bank retired. And still every morning he went into the city by tram and every evening walked home from the city after having dined moderately in George's Street and read the evening paper for dessert.

One evening as he was about to put a morsel of corned beef and cabbage into his mouth his hand stopped. His eyes fixed themselves on a paragraph in the evening paper which he had propped against the water-carafe. He replaced the morsel of food on his plate and read the paragraph attentively. Then he drank a glass of water, pushed his plate to one side, doubled the paper down before him between his elbows and read the paragraph over and over again. The cabbage began to deposit a cold white grease on his plate. The girl came over to him to ask was his dinner not properly cooked. He said it was very good and ate a few mouthfuls of it with difficulty. Then he paid his bill and went out.

He walked along quickly through the November twilight, his stout hazel stick striking the ground regularly, the fringe of the buff *Mail* peeping out of a side-pocket of his tight reefer overcoat. On the lonely road which leads from the Parkgate to Chapelizod he slackened his pace. His stick struck the ground less emphatically and his breath, issuing regularly, almost with a sighing sound, condensed in the wintry air. When he reached his house he went up at once to his bedroom and, taking the paper from his pocket, read the paragraph again by the failing light of the window. He

read it not aloud, but moving his lips as a priest does when he reads the prayers *Secreto*. This was the paragraph:

DEATH OF A LADY AT SYDNEY PARADE

A PAINFUL CASE

Today at the City of Dublin Hospital the Deputy Coroner (in the absence of Mr. Leverett) held an inquest on the body of Mrs. Emily Sinico, aged forty-three years, who was killed at Sydney Parade Station yesterday evening. The evidence showed that the deceased lady, while attempting to cross the line, was knocked down by the engine of the ten o'clock slow train from Kingstown, thereby sustaining injuries of the head and right side which led to her death. James Lennon, driver of the engine, stated that he had been in the employment of the railway company for fifteen years. On hearing the guard's whistle he set the train in motion and a second or two afterwards brought it to rest in response to loud cries. The train was going slowly.

P. Dunne, railway porter, stated that as the train was about to start he observed a woman attempting to cross the lines. He ran towards her and shouted, but, before he could reach her, she was caught by the buffer of the engine and fell to the ground.

A Juror. "You saw the lady fall?"

Witness. "Yes."

Police Sergeant Croly deposed that when he arrived he found the deceased lying on the platform apparently dead. He had the body taken to the waiting-room pending the arrival of the ambulance.

Constable 57E corroborated.

Dr. Halpin, assistant house surgeon of the City of Dublin Hospital, stated that the deceased had two lower ribs fractured and had sustained severe contusions of the right shoulder. The right side of the head had been injured in the fall. The injuries were not sufficient to have caused death in a normal person.

Death, in his opinion, had been probably due to shock and sudden failure of the heart's action.

Mr. H. B. Patterson Finlay, on behalf of the railway company, expressed his deep regret at the accident. The company had always taken every precaution to prevent people crossing the lines except by the bridges, both by placing notices in every station and by the use of patent spring gates at level crossings. The deceased had been in the habit of crossing the lines late at night from platform to platform and, in view of certain other circumstances of the case, he did not think the railway officials were to blame.

Captain Sinico, of Leoville, Sydney Parade, husband of the deceased, also gave evidence. He stated that the deceased was his wife. He was not in Dublin at the time of the accident as he had arrived only that morning from Rotterdam. They had been married for twenty-two years and had lived happily until about two years ago when his wife began to be rather intemperate in her habits.

Miss Mary Sinico said that of late her mother had been in the habit of going out at night to buy spirits. She, witness, had often tried to reason with her mother and had induced her to join a League. She was not at home until an hour after the accident.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence and exonerated Lennon from all blame.

The Deputy Coroner said it was a most painful case, and expressed great sympathy with Captain Sinico and his daughter. He urged on the railway company to take strong measure to prevent the possibility of similar accidents in the future. No blame attached to anyone.

Mr. Duffy raised his eyes from the paper and gazed out of his window on the cheerless evening landscape. The river lay quiet beside the empty distillery and from time to time a light appeared in some house on the Lucan road. What an end! The whole narrative of her death revolted him and it revolted him to think that he had ever spoken to her of what he held sacred. The threadbare phrases, the inane expressions

of sympathy, the cautious words of a reporter won over to conceal the details of a commonplace vulgar death attacked his stomach. Not merely had she degraded herself; she had degraded him. He saw the squalid tract of her vice, miserable and malodorous. His soul's companion! He thought of the hobbling wretches whom he had seen carrying cans and bottles to be filled by the barman. Just God, what an end! Evidently she had been unfit to live, without any strength of purpose, an easy prey to habits, one of the wrecks on which civilisation has been reared. But that she could have sunk so low! Was it possible he had deceived himself so utterly about her? He remembered her outburst of that night and interpreted it in a harsher sense than he had ever done. He had no difficulty now in approving of the course he had taken.

As the light failed and his memory began to wander he thought her hand touched his. The shock which had first attacked his stomach was now attacking his nerves. He put on his overcoat and hat quickly and went out. The cold air met him on the threshold; it crept into the sleeves of his coat. When he came to the public-house at Chapelizod Bridge he went in and ordered a hot punch.

The proprietor served him obsequiously but did not venture to talk. There were five or six workingmen in the shop discussing the value of a gentleman's estate in County Kildare. They drank at intervals from their huge pint tumblers and smoked, spitting often on the floor and sometimes dragging the sawdust over their spits with their heavy boots. Mr. Duffy sat on his stool and gazed at them, without seeing or hearing them. After a while they went out and he called for another punch. He sat a long time over it. The shop was very quiet. The proprietor sprawled on the counter reading

the *Herald* and yawning. Now and again a tram was heard swishing along the lonely road outside.

As he sat there, living over his life with her and evoking alternately the two images in which he now conceived her, he realised that she was dead, that she had ceased to exist, that she had become a memory. He began to feel ill at ease. He asked himself what else could he have done. He could not have carried on a comedy of deception with her openly. He had done what seemed to him best. How was he to blame? Now that she was gone he understood how lonely her life must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room. His life would be lonely too until he, too, died, ceased to exist, became a memory—if anyone remembered him.

It was after nine o'clock when he left the shop. The night was cold and gloomy. He entered the Park by the first gate and walked along under the gaunt trees. He walked through the bleak alleys where they had walked four years before. She seemed to be near him in the darkness. At moments he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touch his. He stood still to listen. Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death? He felt his moral nature falling to pieces.

When he gained the crest of the Magazine Hill he halted and looked along the river towards Dublin, the lights of which burned redly and hospitably in the cold night. He looked down the slope and, at the base, in the shadow of the wall of the Park, he saw some human figures lying. Those venal and furtive loves filled him with despair. He gnawed the rectitude of his life; he felt that he had been outcast from life's feast. One human being had seemed to love him and he had denied her life and happiness: he had sentenced her to

ignominy, a death of shame. He knew that the prostrate creatures down by the wall were watching and wished him gone. No one wanted him; he was outcast from life's feast. He turned his eyes to the grey gleaming river, winding along towards Dublin. Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out of Kingsbridge Station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through the darkness, obstinately and laboriously. It passed slowly out of sight. But still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name.

He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears. He began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm to die away. He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing; the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone.

HAIRCUT [1]

by RING LARDNER

I GOT another barber that comes over from Carterville and helps me out Saturdays, but the rest of the time I can get along all right alone. You can see for yourself that this ain't no New York City and besides that, the most of the boys works all day and don't have no leisure to drop in here and get themselves prettied up.

You're a newcomer, ain't you? I thought I hadn't seen you round before. I hope you like it good enough to stay. As I say, we ain't no New York City or Chicago, but we have pretty good times. Not as good, though, since Jim Kendall was killed. When he was alive, him and Hod Meyers used to keep this town in an uproar. I bet they was more laughin' done here than any town its size in America.

Jim was comical, and Hod was pretty near a match for him. Since Jim's gone, Hod tries to hold his end up just the same as ever, but it's tough goin' when you ain't got nobody to kind of work with.

They used to be plenty fun in here Saturdays. This place is jam-packed Saturdays, from four o'clock on. Jim and Hod would show up right after their supper, round six o'clock. Jim would set himself down in that big chair, nearest the

[1] From *The Love Nest;* copyright, 1926, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

blue spittoon. Whoever had been settin' in that chair, why they'd get up when Jim come in and give it to him.

You'd of thought it was a reserved seat like they have sometimes in a theayter. Hod would generally always stand or walk up and down, or some Saturdays, of course, he'd be settin' in this chair part of the time, gettin' a haircut.

Well, Jim would set there a w'ile without openin' his mouth only to spit, and then finally he'd say to me, "Whitey," —my right name, that is, my right first name is Dick, but everybody round here calls me Whitey—Jim would say, "Whitey, your nose looks like a rosebud tonight. You must of been drinkin' some of your aw de cologne."

So I'd say, "No, Jim, but you look like you'd been drinkin' somethin' of that kind or somethin' worse."

Jim would have to laugh at that, but then he'd speak up and say, "No, I ain't had nothin' to drink, but that ain't sayin' I wouldn't like somethin'. I wouldn't even mind if it was wood alcohol."

Then Hod Myers would say, "Neither would your wife." That would set everybody to laughin' because Jim and his wife wasn't on very good terms. She'd of divorced him only they wasn't no chance to get alimony and she didn't have no way to take care of herself and the kids. She couldn't never understand Jim. He *was* kind of rough, but a good fella at heart.

Him and Hod had all kinds of sport with Milt Sheppard. I don't suppose you've seen Milt. Well, he's got an Adam's apple that looks more like a mushmelon. So I'd be shavin' Milt and when I'd start to shave down here on his neck, Hod would holler, "Hey, Whitey, wait a minute! Before you cut

into it, let's make up a pool and see who can guess closest to the number of seeds."

And Jim would say, "If Milt hadn't of been so hoggish, he'd of ordered a half a cantaloupe instead of a whole one and it might not of stuck in his throat."

All the boys would roar at this and Milt himself would force a smile, though the joke was on him. Jim certainly was a card!

There's his shavin' mug, settin' on the shelf, right next to Charley Vail's. "Charles M. Vail." That's the druggist. He comes in regular for his shave, three times a week. And Jim's is the cup next to Charley's. "James H. Kendall." Jim won't need no shavin' mug no more, but I'll leave it there just the same for old time's sake. Jim certainly was a character!

Years ago, Jim used to travel for a canned goods concern over in Carterville. They sold canned goods. Jim had the whole northern half of the State and was on the road five days out of every week. He'd drop in here Saturdays and tell his experiences for that week. It was rich.

I guess he paid more attention to playin' jokes than makin' sales. Finally the concern let him out and he come right home here and told everybody he'd been fired instead of sayin' he'd resigned like most fellas would of.

It was a Saturday and the shop was full and Jim got up out of that chair and says, "Gentlemen, I got an important announcement to make. I been fired from my job."

Well, they asked him if he was in earnest and he said he was and nobody could think of nothin' to say till Jim finally broke the ice himself. He says, "I been sellin' canned goods and now I'm canned goods myself."

You see, the concern he'd been workin' for was a factory that made canned goods. Over in Carterville. And now Jim said he was canned himself. He was certainly a card!

Jim had a great trick that he used to play w'ile he was travelin'. For instance, he'd be ridin' on a train and they'd come to some little town like, well, like, we'll say, like Benton. Jim would look out the train window and read the signs on the stores.

For instance, they'd be a sign, "Henry Smith, Dry Goods." Well, Jim would write down the name and the name of the town and when he got to wherever he was goin' he'd mail back a postal card to Henry Smith at Benton and not sign no name to it, but he'd write on the card, well, somethin' like "Ask your wife about that book agent that spent the afternoon last week," or "Ask your Missus who kept her from gettin' lonesome the last time you was in Carterville." And he'd sign the card, "A Friend."

Of course, he never knew what really come of none of these jokes, but he could picture what *probably* happened and that was enough.

Jim didn't work very steady after he lost his position with the Carterville people. What he did earn, doin' odd jobs round town, why he spent pretty near all of it on gin and his family might of starved if the stores hadn't of carried them along. Jim's wife tried her hand at dressmakin', but they ain't nobody goin' to get rich makin' dresses in this town.

As I say, she'd of divorced Jim, only she seen that she couldn't support herself and the kids and she was always hopin' that some day Jim would cut out his habits and give her more than two or three dollars a week.

They was a time when she would go to whoever he was

workin' for and ask them to give her his wages, but after she done this once or twice, he beat her to it by borrowin' most of his pay in advance. He told it all round town, how he had outfoxed his Missus. He certainly was a caution!

But he wasn't satisfied with just outwittin' her. He was sore the way she had acted, tryin' to grab off his pay. And he made up his mind he'd get even. Well, he waited till Evans's Circus was advertised to come to town. Then he told his wife and two kiddies that he was goin' to take them to the circus. The day of the circus, he told them he would get the tickets and meet them outside the entrance to the tent.

Well, he didn't have no intentions of bein' there or buyin' tickets or nothin'. He got full of gin and laid round Wright's poolroom all day. His wife and kids waited and waited and of course he didn't show up. His wife didn't have a dime with her, or nowhere else, I guess. So she finally had to tell the kids it was all off and they cried like they wasn't never goin' to stop.

Well, it seems, w'ile they was cryin', Doc Stair came along and he asked what was the matter, but Mrs. Kendall was stubborn and wouldn't tell him, but the kids told him and he insisted on takin' them and their mother in the show. Jim found this out afterwards and it was one reason why he had it in for Doc Stair.

Doc Stair come here about a year and a half ago. He's a mighty handsome young fella and his clothes always look like he has them made to order. He goes to Detroit two or three times a year and w'ile he's there he must have a tailor take his measure and then make him a suit to order. They

cost pretty near twice as much, but they fit a whole lot better than if you just bought them in a store.

For a w'ile everybody was wonderin' why a young doctor like Doc Stair should come to a town like this where we already got old Doc Gamble and Doc Foote that's both been here for years and all the practice in town was always divided between the two of them.

Then they was story got round that Doc Stair's gal had throwed him over, a gal up in the Northern Peninsula somewheres, and the reason he come here was to hide himself away and forget it. He said himself that he thought they wasn't nothin' like general practice in a place like ours to fit a man to be a good all round doctor. And that's why he'd came.

Anyways, it wasn't long before he was makin' enough to live on, though they tell me that he never dunned nobody for what they owed him, and the folks here certainly has got the owin' habit, even in my business. If I had all that was comin' to me for just shaves alone, I could go to Carterville and put up at the Mercer for a week and see a different picture every night. For instance, they's old George Purdy—but I guess I shouldn't ought to be gossipin'.

Well, last year, our coroner died, died of the flu. Ken Beatty, that was his name. He was the coroner. So they had to choose another man to be coroner in his place and they picked Doc Stair. He laughed at first and said he didn't want it, but they made him take it. It ain't no job that anybody would fight for and what a man makes out of it in a year would just about buy seeds for their garden. Doc's the kind, though, that can't say no to nothin' if you keep at him long enough.

But I was goin' to tell you about a poor boy we got here in town—Paul Dickson. He fell out of a tree when he was about ten years old. Lit on his head and it done somethin' to him and he ain't never been right. No harm in him, but just silly. Jim Kendall used to call him cuckoo; that's a name Jim had for anybody that was off their head, only he called people's head their bean. That was another of his gags, callin' head bean and callin' people cuckoo. Only poor Paul ain't crazy, but just silly.

You can imagine, that Jim used to have all kinds of fun with Paul. He'd send him to the White Front Garage for a left-handed monkey wrench. Of course they ain't no such a thing as a left-handed monkey wrench.

And once we had a kind of a fair here and they was a baseball game between the fats and the leans and before the game started Jim called Paul over and sent him way down to Schrader's hardware store to get a key for the pitcher's box.

They wasn't nothin' in the way of gags that Jim couldn't think up, when he put his mind to it.

Poor Paul was always kind of suspicious of people, maybe on account of how Jim had kept foolin' him. Paul wouldn't have much to do with anybody only his own mother and Doc Stair and a girl here in town named Julie Gregg. That is, she ain't a girl no more, but pretty near thirty or over.

When Doc first come to town, Paul seemed to feel like here was a real friend and he hung round Doc's office most of the w'ile; the only time he wasn't there was when he'd go home to eat or sleep or when he seen Julie Gregg doin' her shoppin'.

When he looked out Doc's window and seen her, he'd run downstairs and join her and tag along with her to the dif-

ferent stores. The poor boy was crazy about Julie and she always treated him mighty nice and made him feel like he was welcome, though of course it wasn't nothin' but pity on her side.

Doc done all he could to improve Paul's mind and he told me once that he really thought the boy was gettin' better, that they was times when he was as bright and sensible as anybody else.

But I was goin' to tell you about Julie Gregg. Old Man Gregg was in the lumber business, but got to drinkin' and lost the most of his money and when he died, he didn't leave nothin' but the house and just enough insurance for the girl to skimp along on.

Her mother was a kind of a half invalid and didn't hardly ever leave the house. Julie wanted to sell the place and move somewheres else after the old man died, but the mother said she was born here and would die here. It was tough on Julie, as the young people round this town—well, she's too good for them.

She's been away to school and Chicago and New York and different places and they ain't no subject she can't talk on, where you take the rest of the young folks here and you mention anything to them outside of Gloria Swanson or Tommy Meighan and they think you're delirious. Did you see Gloria in Wages of Virtue? You missed somethin'!

Well, Doc Stair hadn't been here more than a week when he come in one day to get shaved and I recognized who he was as he had been pointed out to me, so I told him about my old lady. She's been ailin' for a couple years and either Doc Gamble or Doc Foote, neither one, seemed to be helpin' her. So he said he would come out and see her, but if she was able

to get out herself, it would be better to bring her to his office where he could make a completer examination.

So I took her to his office and w'ile I was waitin' for her in the reception room, in come Julie Gregg. When somebody comes in Doc Stair's office, they's a bell that rings in his inside office so as he can tell they's somebody to see him.

So he left my old lady inside and come out to the front office and that's the first time him and Julie met and I guess it was what they call love at first sight. But it wasn't fifty-fifty. This young fella was the slickest lookin' fella she'd ever seen in this town and she went wild over him. To him she was just a young lady that wanted to see the doctor.

She'd came on about the same business I had. Her mother had been doctorin' for years with Doc Gamble and Doc Foote and without no results. So she'd heard they was a new doc in town and decided to give him a try. He promised to call and see her mother that same day.

I said a minute ago that it was love at first sight on her part. I'm not only judgin' by how she acted afterwards but how she looked at him that first day in his office. I ain't no mind reader, but it was wrote all over her face that she was gone.

Now Jim Kendall, besides bein' a jokesmith and a pretty good drinker, well, Jim was quite a lady-killer. I guess he run pretty wild durin' the time he was on the road for them Carterville people, and besides that, he'd had a couple little affairs of the heart right here in town. As I say, his wife could of divorced him, only she couldn't.

But Jim was like the majority of men, and women, too, I guess. He wanted Julie Gregg and worked his head off tryin' to land her. Only he'd of said bean instead of head.

Well, Jim's habits and his jokes didn't appeal to Julie and of course he was a married man, so he didn't have no more chance than, well, than a rabbit. That's an expression of Jim's himself. When somebody didn't have no chance to get elected or somethin', Jim would always say they didn't have no more chance than a rabbit.

He didn't make no bones about how he felt. Right in here, more than once, in front of the whole crowd, he said he was stuck on Julie and anybody that could get her from him was welcome to his house and his wife and kids included. But she wouldn't have nothin' to do with him; wouldn't even speak to him on the street. He finally seen he wasn't gettin' nowheres with his usual line so he decided to try the rough stuff. He went right up to her house one evenin' and when she opened the door he forced his way in and grabbed her. But she broke loose and before he could stop her, she run in the next room and locked the door and phoned to Joe Barnes. Joe's the marshal. Jim could hear who she was phonin' to and he beat it before Joe got there.

Joe was an old friend of Julie's pa. Joe went to Jim the next day and told him what would happen if he ever done it again.

I don't know how the news of this little affair leaked out. Chances is that Joe Barnes told his wife and she told somebody else's wife and they told their husband. Anyways, it did leak out and Hod Meyers had the nerve to kid Jim about it, right here in this shop. Jim didn't deny nothin' and kind of laughed it off and said for us all to wait; that lots of people had tried to make a monkey out of him, but he always got even.

Meanw'ile everybody in town was wise to Julie's bein' wild

over the Doc. I don't suppose she had any idear how her face changed when him and her was together; of course she couldn't of, or she'd of kept away from him. And she didn't know that we was all noticin' how many times she made excuses to go up to his office or pass it on the other side of the street and look up in his window to see if he was there. I felt sorry for her and so did most other people.

Hod Meyers kept rubbin' it into Jim about how the Doc had cut him out. Jin didn't pay no attention to the kiddin' and you could see he was plannin' one of his jokes.

One trick Jim had was the knack of changin' his voice. He could make you think he was a girl talkin' and he could mimic any man's voice. To show you how good he was along this line, I'll tell you the joke he played on me once.

You know, in most towns of any size, when a man is dead and needs a shave, why the barber that shaves him soaks him five dollars for the job; that is, he don't soak *him*, but whoever ordered the shave. I just charge three dollars because personally I don't mind much shavin' a dead person. They lay a whole lot stiller than live customers. The only thing is that you don't feel like talkin' to them and you get kind of lonesome.

Well, about the coldest day we ever had here, two years ago last winter, the phone rung at the house w'ile I was home to dinner and I answered the phone and it was a woman's voice and she said she was Mrs. John Scott and her husband was dead and would I come out and shave him.

Old John had always been a good customer of mine. But they live seven miles out in the country, on the Streeter road. Still I didn't see how I could say no.

So I said I would be there, but would have to come in a jitney and it might cost three or four dollars besides the price of the shave. So she, or the voice, it said that was all right, so I got Frank Abbott to drive me out to the place and when I got there, who should open the door but old John himself! He wasn't no more dead than, well, than a rabbit.

It didn't take no private detective to figure out who had played me this little joke. Nobody could of thought it up but Jim Kendall. He certainly was a card!

I tell you this incident just to show you how he could disguise his voice and make you believe it was somebody else talkin'. I'd of swore it was Mrs. Scott had called me. Anyways, some woman.

Well, Jim waited till he had Doc Stair's voice down pat; then he went after revenge.

He called Julie up on a night when he knew Doc was over in Carterville. She never questioned but what it was Doc's voice. Jim said he must see her that night; he couldn't wait no longer to tell her somethin'. She was all excited and told him to come to the house. But he said he was expectin' an important long distance call and wouldn't she please forget her manners for once and come to his office. He said they couldn't nothin' hurt her and nobody would see her and he just *must* talk to her a little w'ile. Well, poor Julie fell for it.

Doc always keeps a night light in his office, so it looked to Julie like they was somebody there.

Meanw'ile Jim Kendall had went to Wright's poolroom, where they was a whole gang amusin' themselves. The most of them had drank plenty of gin, and they was a rough bunch even when sober. They was always strong for Jim's

jokes and when he told them to come with him and see some fun they give up their card games and pool games and followed along.

Doc's office is on the second floor. Right outside his door they's a flight of stairs leadin' to the floor above. Jim and his gang hid in the dark behind these stairs.

Well, Julie come up to Doc's door and rung the bell and they was nothin' doin'. She rung it again and she rung it seven or eight times. Then she tried the door and found it locked. Then Jim made some kind of a noise and she heard it and waited a minute, and then she says, "Is that you, Ralph?" Ralph is Doc's first name.

They was no answer and it must of came to her all of a sudden that she'd been bunked. She pretty near fell downstairs and the whole gang after her. They chased her all the way home, hollerin', "Is that you, Ralph?" and "Oh, Ralphie, dear, is that you?" Jim says he couldn't holler it himself, as he was laughin' too hard.

Poor Julie! She didn't show up here on Main Street for a long, long time afterward.

And of course Jim and his gang told everybody in town, everybody but Doc Stair. They was scared to tell him, and he might of never knowed only for Paul Dickson. The poor cuckoo, as Jim called him, he was here in the shop one night when Jim was still gloatin' yet over what he'd done to Julie. And Paul took in as much of it as he could understand and he run to Doc with the story.

It's a cinch Doc went up in the air and swore he'd make Jim suffer. But it was kind of a delicate thing, because if it got out that he had beat Jim up, Julie was bound to hear of it and then she'd know that Doc knew and of course knowin'

that he knew would make it worse for her than ever. He was goin' to do somethin', but it took a lot of figurin'.

Well, it was a couple of days later when Jim was here in the shop again, and so was the cuckoo. Jim was goin' duck-shootin' the next day and had came in lookin' for Hod Meyers to go with him. I happened to know that Hod had went over to Carterville and wouldn't be home till the end of the week. So Jim said he hated to go alone and he guessed he would call it off. Then poor Paul spoke up and said if Jim would take him he would go along. Jim thought a w'ile and then he said, well, he guessed a half-wit was better than nothin'.

I suppose he was plottin' to get Paul out in the boat and play some joke on him, like pushin' him in the water. Anyways, he said Paul could go. He asked him had he ever shot a duck and Paul said no, he'd never even had a gun in his hands. So Jim said he could set in the boat and watch him and if he behaved himself, he might lend him his gun for a couple of shots. They made a date to meet in the mornin' and that's the last I seen of Jim alive.

Next mornin', I hadn't been open more than ten minutes when Doc Stair come in. He looked kind of nervous. He asked me had I seen Paul Dickson. I said no, but I knew where he was, out duck-shootin' with Jim Kendall. So Doc says that's what he had heard, and he couldn't understand it because Paul had told him he wouldn't never have no more to do with Jim as long as he lived.

He said Paul had told him about the joke Jim had played on Julie. He said Paul had asked him what he thought of the joke and the Doc had told him that anybody that would do a thing like that ought not to be let live.

I said it *had* been a kind of a raw thing, but Jim just couldn't resist no kind of a joke, no matter how raw. I said I thought he was all right at heart, but just bubblin' over with mischief. Doc turned and walked out.

At noon he got a phone call from old John Scott. The lake where Jim and Paul had went shootin' is on John's place. Paul had come runnin' up to the house a few minutes before and said they'd been an accident. Jim had shot a few ducks and give the gun to Paul and told him to try his luck. Paul hadn't never handled a gun and he was nervous. He was shakin' so hard that he couldn't control the gun. He let fire and Jim sunk back in the boat, dead.

Doc Stair, bein' the coroner, jumped in Frank Abbott's flivver and rushed out to Scott's farm. Paul and old John was down on the shore of the lake. Paul had rowed the boat to shore, but they'd left the body in it, waitin' for Doc to come.

Doc examined the body and said they might as well fetch it back to town. They was no use leavin' it there or callin' a jury, as it was a plain case of accidental shootin'.

Personally I wouldn't never leave a person shoot a gun in the same boat I was in unless I was sure they knew somethin' about guns. Jim was a sucker to leave a new beginner have his gun, let alone a half-wit. It probably served Jim right, what he got. But still we miss him round here. He certainly was a card!

Comb it wet or dry?

TICKETS, PLEASE [1]

by D. H. Lawrence

There is in the Midlands a single-line tramway system which boldly leaves the country town and plunges off into the black, industrial countryside, up hill and down dale, through the long, ugly villages of workmen's houses, over canals and railways, past churches perched high and nobly over the smoke and shadows, through stark, grimy, cold little market-places, tilting away in a rush past cinemas and shops down to where the collieries are, then up again, past a little rural church, under ash trees, on in a rush to the terminus, the last little ugly place of industry, the cold little town that shivers on the edge of the wild, gloomy country beyond. There the green and creamy colored tramcars seem to pause and purr with curious satisfaction. But in a few minutes—the clock on the turret of the Cooperative Wholesale Society's Shops gives the time—away it starts once more on the adventure. Again there are the reckless swoops down hill, bouncing the loops; again the chilly wait in the hill-top market-place; again the breathless slithering around the precipitous drop under the church; again the patient halts at the loops, waiting for the outcoming car; so on and on, for two long hours, till at last the city looms be-

[1] From *England, My England;* copyright, 1922, by Thomas Seltzer, Inc. By permission of the author.

yond the fat gas-works, the narrow factories draw near, we are in the sordid streets of the great town, once more we sidle to a standstill at our terminus, abashed by the great crimson and cream-colored city cars, but still perky, jaunty, somewhat daredevil, green as a jaunty sprig of parsley out of a black colliery garden.

To ride on one of these cars is always an adventure. Since we are in war-time, the drivers are men unfit for active service: cripples and hunchbacks. So they have the spirit of the devil in them. The ride becomes a steeplechase. Hurray! we have leapt in a clear jump over the canal bridges —now for the four-lane corner. With a shriek and a trail of sparks we are clear again. To be sure, a tram often leaps the rails—but what matter! It sits in a ditch till other trams come to haul it out. It is quite common for a car, packed with one solid mass of living people, to come to a dead halt in the midst of unbroken blackness, the heart of nowhere on a dark night, and for the driver and the girl conductor to call, "All get off—car's on fire!" Instead, however, of rushing out in a panic, the passengers stolidly reply: "Get on—get on! We're not coming out. We're stopping where we are. Push on, George." So till flames actually appear.

The reason for this reluctance to dismount is that the nights are howlingly cold, black, and windswept, and a car is a haven of refuge. From village to village the miners travel, for a change of cinema, of girl, of pub. The trams are desperately packed. Who is going to risk himself in the black gulf outside, to wait perhaps an hour for another tram, then to see the forlorn notice "Depot only," because there is something wrong! or to greet a unit of three bright

cars all so tight with people that they sail past with a howl of derision. Trams that pass in the night.

This, the most dangerous tram-service in England, as the authorities themselves declare, with pride, is entirely conducted by girls, and driven by rash young men, a little crippled, or by delicate young men, who creep forward in terror. The girls are fearless young hussies. In their ugly blue uniform, skirts up to their knees, shapeless old peaked caps on their heads, they have all the *sang-froid* of an old non-commissioned officer. With a tram packed with howling colliers, roaring hymns downstairs and a sort of antiphony of obscenity upstairs, the lasses are perfectly at their ease. They pounce on the youths who try to evade their ticket-machine. They push off the men at the end of their distance. They are not going to be done in the eye—not they! They fear nobody—and everybody fears them.

"Hello, Annie!"

"Hello, Ted!"

"Oh, mind my corn, Miss Stone. It's my belief you've got a heart of stone, for you've trod on it again."

"You should keep it in your pocket," replies Miss Stone, and she goes sturdily upstairs in her high boots.

"Tickets, please."

She is peremptory, suspicious, and ready to hit first. She can hold her own against ten thousand. The step of that tram-car is her Thermopylæ.

Therefore—there is a certain wild romance aboard these cars—and in the sturdy bosom of Annie herself. The time for soft romance is in the morning, between ten o'clock and one, when things are rather slack; that is, except market-day and Saturday. Thus Annie has time to look about her.

Then she often hops off her car and into a shop where she has spied something, while the driver chats in the main road. There is very good feeling between the girls and the drivers. Are they not companions in peril, shipmates aboard this careering vessel of a tram-car, forever rocking on the waves of a stormy land?

Then, also, during the easy hours, the inspectors are most in evidence. For some reason, everybody employed in this tram-service is young: there are no grey heads. It would not do. Therefore the inspectors are of the right age, and one, the chief, is also good-looking. See him stand on a wet, gloomy morning, in his long oil-skin, his peaked cap well down over his eyes, waiting to board a car. His face is ruddy, his small brown moustache is weathered, he has a faint impudent smile. Fairly tall and agile, even in his waterproof, he springs aboard a car and greets Annie.

"Hello, Annie! Keeping the wet out?"

"Trying to."

There are only two people in the car. Inspecting is soon over. Then for a long and impudent chat on the foot-board, a good, easy, twelve-mile chat.

The inspector's name is John Thomas Raynor—always called John Thomas, except sometimes, in malice, Coddy. His face sets in fury when he is addressed, from a distance, with this abbreviation. There is considerable scandal about John Thomas in half a dozen villages. He flirts with the girl conductors in the morning, and walks out with them on a dark night, when they leave their tram-car at the depot. Of course, the girls quit the service frequently. Then he flirts and walks out with the newcomer; always providing she is sufficiently attractive, and that she will

consent to walk. It is remarkable, however, that most of the girls are quite comely, they are all young, and this roving life aboard the car gives them a sailor's dash and recklessness. What matter how they behave when the ship is in port? Tomorrow they will be aboard again.

Annie, however, was something of a Tartar, and her sharp tongue had kept John Thomas at arm's length for many months. Perhaps, therefore, she liked him all the more: for he always came up smiling, with impudence. She watched him vanquish one girl, then another. She could tell by the movement of his mouth and eyes, when he flirted with her in the morning, that he had been walking out with this lass, or the other, the night before. A fine cock-of-the-walk he was. She could sum him up pretty well.

In this subtle antagonism they knew each other like old friends, they were as shrewd with one another almost as man and wife. But Annie had always kept him sufficiently at arm's length. Besides, she had a boy of her own.

The Statutes fair, however, came in November, at Bestwood. It happened that Annie had the Monday night off. It was a drizzling ugly night, yet she dressed herself up and went to the fair ground. She was alone, but she expected soon to find a pal of some sort.

The roundabouts were veering round and grinding out their music, the side shows were making as much commotion as possible. In the cocoanut shies there were no cocoanuts, but artificial war-time substitutes, which the lads declared were fastened into the irons. There was a sad decline in brilliance and luxury. None the less, the ground was muddy as ever, there was the same crush, the press of faces lighted up by the flares and the electric lights, the

same smell of naphtha and a few fried potatoes, and of electricity.

Who should be the first to greet Miss Annie, on the show ground, but John Thomas. He had a black overcoat buttoned up to his chin, and a tweed cap pulled down over his brows, his face between was ruddy and smiling and handy as ever. She knew so well the way his mouth moved.

She was very glad to have a "boy." To be at the Statutes without a fellow was no fun. Instantly, like the gallant he was, he took her on the Dragons, grim-toothed, round-about switchbacks. It was not nearly so exciting as the tram-car, actually. But, then, to be seated in a shaking green dragon, uplifted above a sea of bubble faces, careering in a rickety fashion in the lower heavens, whilst John Thomas leaned over her, his cigarette in his mouth, was after all the right style. She was a plump, quick, alive little creature. So she was quite excited and happy.

John Thomas made her stay on for the next round. And therefore she could hardly for shame repulse him when he put his arm around her and drew her a little nearer to him, in a very warm and cuddly manner. Besides, he was fairly discreet, he kept his movement as hidden as possible. She looked down, and saw his red, clean hand was out of sight of the crowd. And they knew each other so well. So they warmed up to the fair.

After the Dragons they went on the horses. John Thomas paid each time, so she could but be complaisant. He, of course, sat astride on the outer horse—named "Black Bess" —and she sat sideways, towards him, on the inner horse—named "Wildfire." But of course John Thomas was not

going to sit discreetly on "Black Bess," holding the brass bar. Round they spun and heaved, in the light. And round he swung on his wooden steed, flinging one leg across her mount, and perilously tipping up and down, across the space, half lying back, laughing at her. He was perfectly happy: she was afraid her hat was on one side, but she was excited.

He threw quoits on a table, and won for her two large, pale-blue hat-pins. And then, hearing the noise of the cinemas, announcing another performance, they climbed the boards and went in.

Of course, during these performances pitch darkness falls from time to time, when the machine goes wrong. Then there is a wild whooping, and a loud smacking of simulated kisses. In these moments John Thomas drew Annie towards him. After all, he had a wonderfully warm, cosy way of holding a girl with his arm, he seemed to make such a nice fit. And after all, it was pleasant to be so held: so very comforting and cosy and nice. He leaned over her and she felt his breath on her hair; she knew he wanted to kiss her on the lips. And after all, he was so warm and she fitted into him so softly. After all, she wanted him to touch her lips.

But the light sprang up; she also started electrically, and put her hat straight. He left his arm lying nonchalantly behind her. Well, it was fun, it was exciting to be at the Statutes with John Thomas.

When the cinema was over they went for a walk across the dark, damp fields. He had all the arts of love-making. He was especially good at holding a girl, when he sat with her on a stile in the black, drizzling darkness. He seemed

to be holding her in space, against his own warmth and gratification. And his kisses were soft and slow and searching.

So Annie walked out with John Thomas, though she kept her own boy dangling in the distance. Some of the tramgirls chose to be huffy. But there, you must take things as you find them, in this life.

There was no mistake about it, Annie liked John Thomas a good deal. She felt so rich and warm in herself whenever he was near. And John Thomas really liked Annie, more than usual. The soft, melting way in which she could flow into a fellow, as if she melted into his very bones, was something rare and good. He fully appreciated this.

But with a developing acquaintance there began a developing intimacy. Annie wanted to consider him a person, a man; she wanted to take an intelligent interest in him, and to have an intelligent response. She did not want a mere nocturnal presence, which was what he was so far. And she prided herself that he could not leave her.

Here she made her mistake. John Thomas intended to remain a nocturnal presence; he had no idea of becoming an all-round individual to her. When she started to take an intelligent interest in him and his life and his character, he sheered off. He hated intelligent interest. And he knew that the only way to stop it was to avoid it. The possessive female was aroused in Annie. So he left her.

It is no use saying she was not surprised. She was at first startled, thrown out of her count. For she had been so *very* sure of holding him. For a while she was staggered, and everything became uncertain to her. Then she wept

with fury, indignation, desolation, and misery. Then she had a spasm of despair. And then, when he came, still impudently, on to her car, still familiar, but letting her see by the movement of his head that he had gone away to somebody else for the time being, and was enjoying pastures new, then she determined to have her own back.

She had a very shrewd idea what girls John Thomas had taken out. She went to Nora Purdy. Nora was a tall, rather pale, but well-built girl, with beautiful yellow hair. She was rather secretive.

"Hey!" said Annie, accosting her; then softly, "Who's John Thomas on with now?"

"I don't know," said Nora.

"Why tha does," said Annie, ironically lapsing into dialect. "Tha knows as well as I do."

"Well, I do then," said Nora. "It isn't me, so don't bother."

"It's Cissy Meakin, isn't it?"

"It is, for all I know."

"Hasn't he got a face on him!" said Annie. "I don't half like his cheek. I could knock him off the footboard when he comes round at me."

"He'll get dropped on one of these days," said Nora.

"Ay, he will when somebody makes up their mind to drop it on him. I should like to see him taken down a peg or two, shouldn't you?"

"I shouldn't mind," said Nora.

"You've got quite as much cause to as I have," said Annie. "But we'll drop on him one of these days, my girl. What? Don't you want to?"

"I don't mind," said Nora.

But as a matter of fact, Nora was much more vindictive than Annie.

One by one Annie went the round of the old flames. It so happened that Cissy Meakin left the tramway service in quite a short time. Her mother made her leave. Then John Thomas was on the *qui-vive*. He cast his eyes over his old flock. And his eyes lighted on Annie. He thought she would be safe now. Besides, he liked her.

She arranged to walk home with him on Sunday night. It so happened that her car would be in the depot at half-past nine: the last car would come in at ten-fifteen. So John Thomas was to wait for her there.

At the depot the girls had a little waiting-room of their own. It was quite rough, but cosy, with a fire and an oven and a mirror, and table and wooden chairs. The half dozen girls who knew John Thomas only too well had arranged to take service this Sunday afternoon. So, as the cars began to come in, early, the girls dropped into the waiting room. And instead of hurrying off home, they sat around the fire and had a cup of tea. Outside was the darkness and lawlessness of war-time.

John Thomas came on the car after Annie, at about a quarter to ten. He poked his head easily into the girls' waiting-room.

"Prayer-meeting?" he asked.

"Ay," said Laura Sharp. "Ladies only."

"That's me!" said John Thomas. It was one of his favorite exclamations.

"Shut the door, boy," said Muriel Baggaley.

"On which side of me?" said John Thomas.

"Which tha likes," said Polly Birkin.

He had come in and closed the door behind him. The girls moved in their circle, to make a place for him near the fire. He took off his great-coat and pushed back his hat.

"Who handles the teapot?" he said.

Nora Purdy silently poured him out a cup of tea.

"Want a bit o' my bread and drippin'?" said Muriel Baggaley to him.

"Ay, give us a bit."

And he began to eat his piece of bread.

"There's no place like home, girls," he said.

They all looked at him as he uttered this piece of impudence. He seemed to be sunning himself in the presence of so many damsels.

"Especially if you're not afraid to go home in the dark," said Laura Sharp.

"Me! By myself I am."

They sat still till they heard the last tram come in. In a few minutes Emma Houselay entered.

"Come on, my old duck," cried Polly Birkin.

"It *is* perishing," said Emma, holding her fingers to the fire.

"But—I'm afraid to, go home in, the dark," sang Laura Sharp, the tune having got into mind.

"Who're you going with tonight, John Thomas?" asked Muriel Baggaley, coolly.

"Tonight?" said John Thomas. "Oh, I'm going home by myself tonight—all on my lonely-O."

"That's me!" said Nora Purdy, using his own ejaculation.

The girls laughed shrilly.

"Me as well, Nora," said John Thomas.

"Don't know what you mean," said Laura.

"Yes, I'm toddling," said he, rising and reaching for his overcoat.

"Nay," said Polly. "We're all here waiting for you."

"We've got to be up in good time in the morning," he said, in the benevolent official manner.

They all laughed.

"Nay," said Muriel. "Don't leave us all lonely, John Thomas. Take one!"

"I'll take the lot, if you like," he responded, gallantly.

"That won't do, either," said Muriel. "Two's company; seven's too much of a good thing."

"Nay—take one," said Laura. "Fair and square, all above board, and say which."

"Ay," cried Annie, speaking for the first time. "Pick, John Thomas; let's hear thee."

"Nay," he said. "I'm going home quiet tonight. Feeling good, for once."

"Whereabouts?" said Annie. "Take a good un, then. But tha's got to take one of us!"

"Nay, how can I take one," he said, laughing uneasily. "I don't want to make enemies."

"You'd only make *one*," said Annie.

"The chosen *one*," added Laura.

"Oh, my! Who said girl!" exclaimed John Thomas, again turning, as if to escape. "Well—good-night."

"Nay, you've got to make your pick," said Muriel. "Turn your face to the wall, and say which one touches you. Go on—we shall only just touch your back—one of us. Go

on—turn your face to the wall, and don't look, and say which one touches you."

He was uneasy, mistrusting them. Yet he had not the courage to break away. They pushed him to a wall and stood him there with his face to it. Behind his back they all grimaced, tittering. He looked so comical. He looked around uneasily.

"Go on!" he cried.

"You're looking—you're looking!" they shouted.

He turned his head away. And suddenly, with a movement like a swift cat, Annie went forward and fetched him a box on the side of the head that sent his cap flying, and himself staggering. He started round.

But at Annie's signal they all flew at him, slapping him, pinching him, pulling his hair, though more in fun than in spite or anger. He, however, saw red. His blue eyes flamed with strange fear as well as fury, and he butted through the girls to the door. It was locked. He wrenched at it. Roused, alert, the girls stood round and looked at him. He faced them, at bay. At that moment they were rather horrifying to him, as they stood in their short uniforms. He was distinctly afraid.

"Come on, John Thomas! Come on! Choose!" said Annie.

"What are you after? Open the door," he said.

"We sha'n't—not till you've chosen!" said Muriel.

"Chosen the one you're going to marry," she replied.

He hesitated a moment.

"Open the blasted door," he said, "and get back to your senses." He spoke with official authority.

"You've got to choose!" cried the girls.

"Come on!" cried Annie, looking him in the eye. "Come on! Come on!"

He went forward, rather vaguely. She had taken off her belt, and swinging it, she fetched him a sharp blow over the head with the buckle end. He sprang and seized her. But immediately the other girls rushed upon him, pulling and tearing and beating him. Their blood was now thoroughly up. He was their sport now. They were going to have their own back, out of him. Strange, wild creatures, they hung on him and rushed on him to bear him down. His tunic was torn right up the back, Nora had hold at the back of his collar, and was actually strangling him. Luckily the button burst. He struggled in a wild frenzy of fury and terror, almost mad terror. His tunic was simply torn off his back, his shirt-sleeves were torn away, his arms were naked. The girls rushed at him, clenched their hands on him and pulled at him: or they rushed at him and pushed him, butted him with all their might: or they struck him wild blows. He ducked and cringed and struck sideways. They became more intense.

At last he was down. They rushed on him, kneeling on him. He had neither breath nor strength to move. His face was bleeding with a long scratch, his brow was bruised.

Annie knelt on him, the other girls knelt and hung on him. Their faces were flushed, their hair wild, their eyes were all glittering strangely. He lay at last quite still, with face averted, as an animal lies when it is defeated and at the mercy of the captor. Sometimes his eye glanced back at the wild faces of the girls. His breast rose heavily, his wrists were torn.

"Now then, my fellow!" gasped Annie at length. "Now then—now—"

At the sound of her terrifying, cold triumph, he suddenly started to struggle as an animal might, but the girls threw themselves upon him with unnatural strength and power, forcing him down.

"Yes—now, then!" gasped Annie at length.

And there was a dead silence, in which the thud of heart-beating was to be heard. It was a suspense of pure silence in every soul.

"Now you know where you are," said Annie.

The sight of his white, bare arm maddened the girls. He lay in a kind of trance of fear and antagonism. They felt themselves filled with supernatural strength.

Suddenly Polly started to laugh—to giggle wildly—helplessly—and Emma and Muriel joined in. But Annie and Laura and Nora remained the same, tense, watchful, with gleaming eyes. He winced away from these eyes.

"Yes," said Annie, in a curious low tone, secret and deadly. "Yes! You've got it now! You know what you've done, don't you? You know what you've done."

He made no sound nor sign, but lay with bright, averted eyes, and averted, bleeding face.

"You ought to be *killed,* that's what you ought," said Annie tensely. "You ought to be *killed.*" And there was a terrifying lust in her voice.

Polly was ceasing to laugh, and giving long-drawn Oh-h-hs and sighs as she came to herself.

"He's got to choose," she said, vaguely.

"Oh, yes, he has," said Laura, with vindictive decision.

"Do you hear—do you hear?" said Annie. And with

a sharp movement, that made him wince, she turned his face to her.

"Do you hear?" she repeated, shaking him.

But he was quite dumb. She fetched him a sharp slap on the face. He started, and his eyes widened. Then his face darkened with defiance, after all.

"Do you hear?" she repeated.

He only looked at her with hostile eyes.

"Speak!" she said, putting her face devilishly near his.

"What?" he said, almost overcome.

"You've got to *choose!*" she cried, as if it were some terrible menace, and as if it hurt her that she could not exact more.

"What?" he said, in fear.

"Choose your girl, Coddy. You've got to choose her now. And you'll get your neck broken if you play any more of your tricks, my boy. You're settled now."

There was a pause. Again he averted his face. He was cunning in his overthrow. He did not mean to give in to them really—no, not if they tore him to bits.

"All right, then," he said, "I choose Annie." His voice was strange and full of malice. Annie let go of him as if he had been a hot coal.

"He's chosen Annie!" said the girls in chorus.

"Me!" cried Annie. She was still kneeling, but away from him. He was still lying prostrate, with averted face. The girls grouped uneasily around.

"Me!" repeated Annie, with a terrible bitter accent.

Then she got up, drawing away from him with strange disgust and bitterness.

"I wouldn't touch him," she said.

But her face quivered with a kind of agony, she seemed as if she would fall. The other girls turned aside. He remained lying on the floor, with his torn clothes and bleeding, averted face.

"Oh, if he's chosen—" said Polly.

"I don't want him—he can choose again," said Annie, with the same rather bitter hopelessness.

"Get up," said Polly, lifting his shoulder. "Get up."

He rose slowly, a strange, ragged, dazed creature. The girls eyed him from a distance, curiously, furtively, dangerously.

"Who wants him?" cried Laura, roughly.

"Nobody," they answered, with contempt. Yet each one of them waited for him to look at her, hoped he would look at her. All except Annie, and something was broken in her.

He, however, kept his face closed and averted from them all. There was a silence of the end. He picked up the torn pieces of his tunic, without knowing what to do with them. The girls stood about uneasily, flushed, panting, tidying their hair and their dress unconsciously, and watching him. He looked at none of them. He espied his cap in a corner, and went and picked it up. He put it on his head, and one of the girls burst into a shrill, hysteric laugh at the sight he presented. He, however, took no heed, but went straight to where his overcoat hung on a peg. The girls moved away from contact with him as if he had been an electric wire. He put on his coat and buttoned it down. Then he rolled his tunic-rags into a bundle, and stood before the locked door, dumbly.

"Open the door, somebody," said Laura.

"Annie's got the key," said one.

Annie silently offered the key to the girls. Nora unlocked the door.

"Tit for tat, old man," she said. "Show yourself a man, and don't bear a grudge."

But without a word or sign he had opened the door and gone, his face closed, his head dropped.

"That'll learn him," said Laura.

"Coddy!" said Nora.

"Shut up, for God's sake!" cried Annie fiercely, as if in torture.

"Well, I'm ready to go, Polly. Look sharp!" said Muriel.

The girls were anxious to be off. They were tidying themselves hurriedly, with mute, stupefied faces.

A CUP OF TEA [1]

by KATHERINE MANSFIELD

ROSEMARY FELL was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces. . . . But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and . . . artists—quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite presentable and amusing.

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street. If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all

1 From *The Dove's Nest,* copyright, 1923, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. "Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones." And she was followed to the car by a thin shopgirl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes. . . .

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street. It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified that he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something . . .

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare. . . ." And, breathing deeply he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

Today it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms around his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such

things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and his pale bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: "If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice."

"Charming!" Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. "Twenty-eight guineas, madam."

"Twenty-eight guineas." Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich. . . . She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman's head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: "Well, keep it for me—will you? I'll . . ."

But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps look sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed

her muff to her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course, the car was there. She'd only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it's awful. One oughtn't to give way to them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from? —was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: "Madam, may I speak to you a moment?"

"Speak to me?" Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

"M-madam," stammered the voice. "Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?"

"A cup of tea?" There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn't in the least the voice of a beggar. "Then have you no money at all?" asked Rosemary.

"None, madam," came the answer.

"How extraordinary!" Rosemary peered through the dusk, and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard her-

self saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: "I simply took her home with me," as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: "Come home to tea with me."

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. "I mean it," she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. "Why won't you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea."

"You—you don't mean it, madam," said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.

"But I do," cried Rosemary. "I want you to. To please me. Come along."

The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. "You're—you're not taking me to the police station?" she stammered.

"The police station!" Rosemary laughed out. "Why should I be so cruel? No, I only want to make you warm and to hear—anything you care to tell me."

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

"There!" said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, "Now I've got you," as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that—wonderful things did happen in life, that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich people had hearts, and that women *were* sisters. She turned impulsively, saying: "Don't

be frightened. After all, why shouldn't you come back with me? We're both women. If I'm the more fortunate, you ought to expect . . ."

But happily at that moment, for she didn't know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the little rich girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

"Come, come upstairs," said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. "Come up to my room." And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring for Jeanne, but take off her things by herself. The great thing was to be natural!

And "There!" cried Rosemary again, as they reached her beautiful big bedroom with the curtains drawn, the fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer furniture, her gold cushions and the primrose and blue rugs.

The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn't mind that.

"Come and sit down," she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, "in this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold."

"I daren't, madam," said the girl, and she edged backwards.

"Oh, please,"—Rosemary ran forward—"you mustn't be frightened, you mustn't, really. Sit down, and when I've

taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cosy. Why are you afraid?" And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just as she had been put, with her hands by her sides and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere, she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn't acknowledge it. She leant over her, saying: "Won't you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much more comfortable without a hat, isn't one?"

There was a whisper that sounded like "Very good, madam," and the crushed hat was taken off.

"Let me help you off with your coat, too," said Rosemary.

The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary's mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: "I'm very sorry, madam, but I'm going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don't have something."

"Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!" Rosemary rushed to the bell.

"Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!"

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out: "No, I don't want no brandy. I never drink brandy. It's a cup of tea I want, madam." And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

"Don't cry, poor little thing," she said. "Don't cry." And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, birdlike shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and gasped out: "I can't go on no longer like this. I can't bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can't bear no more."

"You shan't have to. I'll look after you. Don't cry any more. Don't you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We'll have tea and you'll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. *Do* stop crying. It's so exhausting. Please!"

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn't eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvellous. When the tea-table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

"And when did you have your last meal?" she asked softly.

But at that moment the door-handle turned.

"Rosemary, may I come in?" It was Philip.

"Of course."

He came in. "Oh, I'm so sorry," he said, and stopped and stared.

"It's quite all right," said Rosemary, smiling. "This is my friend, Miss——"

"Smith, madam," said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

"Smith," said Rosemary. "We are going to have a little talk."

"Oh, yes," said Philip. "Quite," and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. "It's a beastly afternoon," he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Rosemary enthusiastically. "Vile."

Philip smiled his charming smile. "As a matter of fact," said he, "I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?"

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her. "Of course she will." And they went out of the room together.

"I say," said Philip, when they were alone. "Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?"

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: "I picked her up in Curzon Street. Really. She's a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me."

"But what on earth are you going to do with her?" cried Philip.

"Be nice to her," said Rosemary quickly. "Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don't know how. We haven't talked yet. But show her—treat her—make her feel—"

"My darling girl," said Philip, "you're quite mad, you know. It simply can't be done."

"I knew you'd say that," retorted Rosemary. "Why not? I want to. Isn't that a reason? And besides, one's always reading about these things. I decided—"

"But," said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, "she's so astonishingly pretty."

"Pretty?" Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. "Do you think so? I—I hadn't thought about it."

"Good Lord!" Philip struck a match. "She's absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However . . . I think you're making a ghastly mistake. Sorry, darling, if I'm crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up *The Milliner's Gazette.*"

"You absurd creature!" said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to her bedroom. She went to her writing-room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her cheque book towards her. But no, cheques would be of no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

"I only wanted to tell you," said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, "Miss Smith won't dine with us tonight."

Philip put down the paper. "Oh, what's happened? Previous engagement?"

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. "She insisted on going," said she, "so I gave the poor little thing a present of money. I couldn't keep her against her will, could I?" she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little, and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip's cheeks.

"Do you like me?" said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

"I like you awfully," he said, and he held her tighter. "Kiss me."

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily, "I saw a fascinating little box today. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?"

Philip jumped her on his knee. "You may, little wasteful one," said he.

But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

"Philip," she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, "am I *pretty*?"

THE SEAL MAN [1]

by JOHN MASEFIELD

"THE seals is pretty when they do be playing," said the old woman. "Ah, I seen them frisking their tails till you'd think it was rocks with the seas beating on them, the time the storm's on. I seen the merrows of the sea sitting yonder on the dark stone, and they had crowns on them, and they were laughing. The merrows is not good; it's not good to see too many of them. They are beautiful like young men in their shirts playing hurley. They're as beautiful as anything you would be seeing in Amerikey or Australeyey, or any place. The seals is beautiful too, going through the water in the young of the day; but they're not so beautiful as them. The seals is no good either. It's a great curse keeps them the way they are, not able to live either in the sea or on the land.

"One time there was a man of the O'Donnells came here, and he was a bad man. A saint in Heaven would have been bothered to find good in him. He died of the fever that came before the Famine. I was a girl then; and if you'd seen the people in them times; there wasn't enough to bury them. The pigs used to eat them in the loanings. And their mouths would be all green where they'd eaten grass from want of

[1] From *A Mainsail Haul,* copyright, 1913, by John Masefield. By permission of The Macmillan Company.

food. If you'd seen the houses there was then, indeed, you'd think the place bewitched. But the cabins is all fell in, like yonder, and there's no dancing or fiddling, or anything at all, and all of my friends is gone to Amerikey or Australeyey; I've no one at all to bury me, unless it's that humpy one who comes here, and she's as proud as a Jew. She's no cause to be proud, with a hump on her; her father was just a poor man, the same as any.

"This O'Donnell I was telling you. My father was at his wake. And they'd the candles lit, and they were drinking putcheen. My father was nearest the door, and a fear took him, and he got up, with his glass in his hand, and he cried out: 'There's something here is not good.' And another of them said: 'There's something wants to get out.' And another said: 'It's himself wants to go out into the dark night.' And another said: 'For the love of God, open the door.' So my father flung the door open; and, outside, the moon shone down to the sea. And the corpse of the O'Donnell was all blue, and it got up with the sheet knotted on it, and walked out without leaving a track. So they followed it, saying their prayers to Almighty God, and it walked on down to the sea. And when it came to the edge of the sea, the sea was like a flame before it. And it bowed there, three times; and each time it rose up it screamed. And all the seals, and all the merrows, and all them that's under the tides, they came up to welcome it. They called out to the corpse and laughed; and the corpse laughed back, and fell on to the sand. My father and the other men saw the wraith pass from it, into the water, as it fell. It was like a little black boy, laughing; with great long arms on him. It was all bald and black; and its hands moved like he was tickling someone.

"And after that the priest had him buried, like they buried the Old Ones; but the wraith passed into a bull seal. You would be feared to see the like of the bull seal. There was a man of the O'Kanes fired a blessed shilling at him, and the seal roared up at him and tore his arm across. There was marks like black stars on him after till he died. And the bull seal walked like a man at the change of the moon, like a big, tall, handsome man stepping the roads. You'd be feared, sir, if you saw the like. He set his eyes on young Norah O'Hara. Lovely she was. She'd little ways, sir, would draw the heart out of an old bachelor. Wasn't it a great curse he should take her when there was old hags the like of Mary that has no more beauty than a withered broom that you wouldn't be bothered to mend or a done-out old gather-up of a duck that a hungry dog would blush to be biting? Still, he took Norah.

"She had a little son, and the little son was a seal-man; the priest wouldn't sign him with the cross. When Norah died he used always to be going to the sea; he would always be swimming. He'd little soft brown hair, like a seal's, the prettiest you would be seeing. He used to talk to the seals. My father was coming home one night from Carnmore, and he saw the little seal-man in the sea; and the seals were playing with him, singing songs. But my father was feared to hear; he ran away. They stoned the seal-man, whiles, after that; but whiles they didn't stone it. They had a kindness for it, although it had no holy water on it. It was a very young thing to be walking the world, and it was a beautiful wee thing, with its eyes so pretty; so it grew up to be a man.

"Them that live in the water, they have ways of calling people. Them who passed this seal-man, they felt the call in their hearts. Indeed, if you passed the seal-man, stepping the roads, you would get a queer twist from the way he looked at you. And he set his love on a young girl of the O'Keefe's, a little young girl with no more in her than the flower on its stalk. You would see them in the loanings coming home, or in the bright of the day going. There was a strong love was on them two young things; it was like the love of the Old Ones that took nine deaths to kill. They would be telling Kate it was not right she should set her love on one who wasn't like ourselves; but there's few indeed is the young'll listen. They are all for pleasure, all for pleasure, before they are withered old hags, the like of my sister Mary. And at last they shut her up at home, to keep her from seeing him. And he came by her cabin to the west of the road, calling. There was a strong love came up to her at that, and she put down her sewing on the table, and 'Mother,' she says, 'there's no lock, and no key, and no bolt, and no door. There's no iron, nor no stone, nor anything at all will keep me this night from the man I love.' And she went out into the moonlight to him, there by the bush where the flowers is pretty, beyond the river. And he says to her: 'You are all of the beauty of the world, will you come where I go, over the waves of the sea?' And she says to him: 'My treasure and my strength,' she says, 'I would follow you on the frozen hills, my feet bleeding.'

"Then they went down into the sea together, and the moon made a track upon the sea, and they walked down it; it

was like a flame before them. There was no fear at all on her, only a great love like the love of the Old Ones, that was stronger than the touch of the fool. She had a little white throat, and little cheeks like flowers, and she went down into the sea with her man, who wasn't a man at all. She was drowned, of course. It's like he never thought that she wouldn't bear the sea like herself. She was drowned, drowned.

"When it come light they saw the seal-man sitting yonder on the rock, and she lying by him dead, with her face as white as a flower. He was crying and beating her hands to bring life to her. It would have drawn pity from a priest to hear him though he wasn't Christian. And at last, when he saw that she was drowned, he took her in his arms and slipped into the sea like a seal. And he swam, carrying her, with his head up, laughing and laughing and laughing, and no one ever saw him again at all."

BIG DAN REILLY[1]

by HARVEY O'HIGGINS

"He is a chip, a hand specimen, from the basement structure upon which American politics rest."

—H. G. Wells, *The Future in America.*

I

CALL it "Headquarters." That is the way the politicians always refer to it, although it is a club. And imagine the politicians sitting in their puffy leather chairs around the reception room of the club that night, looking out on the street lights of Fifth Avenue, under oil portraits of their worthy predecessors, with brass cuspidors at their feet and brass match safes at their elbows. And imagine them raising a cloud of cigar smoke and a private mutter of political conversation, and an occasional quiet chuckle or an amused cough that represented laughter—a red-faced, hoarse cough, with one eyebrow up and a fat hand over the mouth.

"Some of the best men in New York were there," Gatecliff boasted, in his account of what happened. "Some of *the* best. Millionaires. Heads of corporations."

He named names that it would be almost blasphemous to repeat in print.

1 From *Some Distinguished Americans,* copyright, 1922, by Harvey O'Higgins. By permission of the author and from Harper & Bros.

At the far end of the room, the descending stairs made a railed landing like a balcony. Big Dan Reilly was in the habit of coming down those stairs to hold his reception on the floor of the room, nodding and shaking hands and talking here and there freely, unless the matter was so confidential that it was necessary to withdraw to a corner table. And everybody always preserved an appearance of taking part in some social function that was genially informal, perhaps because Dan Reilly's power was outside the law and any consultation with him might well make itself look as innocent as possible.

This night he appeared, as expected, on the stairs; and they all rose as usual to greet him still chatting, as if their rising were automatic and absent-minded, although it was neither. He descended as far as the landing and stood with his hands in his pockets, looking down sullenly at the men who turned to him in surprise as he waited.

He was dressed in black. Ordinarily he wore clothes that had an air of the race track and the betting ring. His big, good-natured, florid, round face looked heavy, sulky, lowering. He said, "I'll see *you,*" and pointed insolently to a man below him.

Silence. Amazed silence.

He looked from face to face. "And I'll see *you.*"

This man flushed, examined his cigar, put it between his biting teeth, and smoked with narrowed eyes, thoughtfully.

"And *you.*"

A nervous clearing of some embarrassed throat.

"And *you.*"

He picked out a half dozen. "The rest o' you," he said, "can go home."

And they went home.

"We *went* home!" Gatecliff cried. "We *went home!* But"—and he marked his point with a spiteful forefinger—"it ended Big Dan as the boss of the organization. He never got a chance to speak that way to a group of gentlemen again."

II

From one point of view, the scene ought to be historic. It ought to be painted by the artist who did that museum picture of the French king's confessor, a barefooted monk, descending the grand staircase of the palace while all the silken courtiers bowed and smirked before him. (Dan Reilly, of the Bowery and the underworld, saying contemptuously to the nobility and ruling class of New York, "The rest o' you can go home!")

From another point of view, it is almost as scandalous as anything you will find in the secret memoirs of the French king's court. Gatecliff was there as the confidential adviser of a "traction magnate" who wished to procure for his company a monopoly right in certain city streets in order to operate a public utility; and the magnate was discreetly offering Big Dan and the other leaders of the organization some million dollars' worth of stock in the company, in return for the franchise. (It is impossible to be more explicit without incurring a libel suit.) Moreover, all the other millionaires were there for similar reasons. Big Dan controlled the votes that made it necessary for the "best men" in New York to do business with him. It was illegal, corrupt, poisonous—but there it was. They had to do

it, or somebody else would. They put a good face on it—a polite, conventional face—and Big Dan had hitherto looked at that face grimly, but with every appearance of being deceived by it. Now, incredibly, he had reached out his great, brutal hand and smacked it.

Why?

III

The answer is simple. It merely involves an explanation of Big Dan's character and his point of view, the story of his life, a picture of the moral and political background of his career, and an account of his relations with his mother, with Gatecliff, and with Gatecliff's sister Mary.

A man suddenly says a decisive word and makes a final gesture. Behind his impulse to say that word and make that gesture there is a lifetime of growth, experience, emotion. All his past—all that he has known and thought and seen and suffered up to that moment—all has a part in the motive of his action. And all his future comes influenced out of it.

Dan Reilly's moment on the balcony was such a moment. It is not impossible to find its vague beginnings in events that occurred even before his birth. For example:

Some weeks before he was born his father was killed in the "infamous draft riots" of the summer of 1863. His father was the Hugh Reilly, the "Red" Reilly, who led the riots in his district because of the clause in the Conscription Act by which a man could buy exemption for three hundred dollars. Red Reilly could not understand why only the poor in pocket should be forced to die for their country. He died learning it. He was in arrears with his rent at the

time—as he was at all times—and the landlord evicted the widow of the traitor, in a burst of patriotism, as soon as he heard what had happened to Reilly.

Red Reilly's unborn son heard it later. He heard it as the story of his father's revolt against those governing classes who had passed a draft law providing for their own exemption. And I believe it is not too far fetched to see him as Red Reilly's son unconsciously carrying on his father's quarrel, when he stood on the stairs at Headquarters and said to later beneficiaries of legislative privilege, "The rest o' you can go home."

And whether that is far fetched or not, this much is certain: the circumstances of his birth strongly determined the psychology of his great dramatic moment.

With his mother evicted as the widow of a delinquent traitor, he might have been born in the gutter if she had not been given shelter by a woman more unfortunate even than she. Consequently, he was born "amid the most depraved surroundings"—in a tenement that stood in the back yard of a Grove Street house that was itself sufficiently depraved, although it kept up an appearance of red-brick respectability with a rare old Colonial door and a notable fanlight.

The shack behind it was a clapboarded wooden building that had been a wagon factory, and then a livery stable, before it became unfit for the use of valuable animals. It was occupied by a number of unpitied outcasts who lived there, practically rent free, by the grace of the woman who kept the Grove Street house. There were no chimneys in the building. Stovepipes protruded through some of the broken window panes; but there was no stove in the room

in which the future ruler of New York was born; its regular occupant kept herself warm with alcohol. It was a room that had been part of the paint shop of the wagon factory, and in one corner the drip of innumerable cart wheels had deposited a ridge, a hummock, a rounded stalagmite, of hardened paint. The head of Mrs. Reilly's mattress took advantage of that mound to make a pillow.

Dan was born on a cool August evening, after a day's rain, by the light of a blessed candle that had been borrowed from a neighbor. He was a twelve-pound baby, as lusty as a young porker, and his arrival was as much an event as if he had been born in a convent. The thwarted maternal instincts of his neighbors received him with gratified excitement. They carried him up and down stairs wrapped in an old white-silk petticoat, exhibiting him from room to room. As a man-child, he had the rank of a young heir among his slaves.

"There y' are!" as one of them said, admiringly. "Many's the gurl'll break her heart fer *you,* yuh little Turk!"

The occupants of the Grove Street house lavished gifts on him and invalid comforts on his mother. For two months they cared for her while she was too ill to help herself. They brought her sewing to do when she grew strong enough to resent charity. She said good-by to them regretfully when she was well enough to move on to more comfortable surroundings. And she parted from them with a gratitude that she never forgot or allowed her son to forget.

Once when the police were making a vice crusade ostentatiously, she told him the story of his birth and said, "Danny, if y' iver do anything to make life harder fer the likes o' *thim,* yeh're no son o' mine."

He did a great deal to make life harder for the likes of them, as any ruler makes life harder for his subjects; there were hundreds of them in his home district, and they had to pay his henchmen for the protection they received. But he protected them from other exploitation and from the sort of hardship and persecution that his mother besought him to spare them. "The king of the underworld," "his saloons their known resorts," he accepted them on their own terms as part of his constituency. He represented them in politics as well as he represented anybody. And he was still representing them when he stood on the balcony at Headquarters and looked down on those men, who, he knew, despised him secretly as much as they despised his constituents.

IV

Most determinative of all, he stood there as his mother's son.

When she left the Grove Street tenement she carried him to a room in Hudson Street, and settled down to do scrubbing and washing and sewing to support him. She was a frail young woman, from the north of Ireland, thrifty and ambitious. She had married Red Reilly against everyone's advice but his, and she had emigrated to America with him to escape the commiseration of the prejudiced. She was without relatives in New York, and almost without friends. Alone, in silence, like a prisoner digging a tunnel secretly, she set to work to escape from poverty.

And she failed because of a characteristic which, in Big Dan Reilly, made his political fortune. She was insanely charitable. Anyone who asked her for help could have it

from her. She would give away her money, her food, her clothes, her bedding. It was as if, having suffered the extreme of shipwreck and been rescued by the charity of the most needy, she was unable thereafter to refuse anyone a share in whatever little she had. She was never able to get ahead. There was never anything for to-morrow in her purse or her larder. And it was this quality in Big Dan that afterward made it possible for him to hold his followers together by what the newspapers called "the cohesive power of public plunder." More of that later.

By the time he was six years old he was selling newspapers and blacking shoes, in order to help her. But only after school hours. She made him go to school faithfully. And even as a shoeblack he showed some organizing ability, for he got the monopoly right to shine the shoes of the policemen in the station house of his precinct, and he did the work so well that he obtained the same work in another precinct and took an assistant. He sold newspapers in City Hall Park long enough to make friends in a press room, where he took the job of helping to carry papers from the presses to the delivery carts, at a salary of a dollar and a half a week.

"When I got to be ten years old," he said once, in a speech on the Bowery, "I got a teacher in school to let me go at two o'clock, an' then I was able to serve that newspaper all to myself. I passed the grammar department o' my school, an' I was one o' seven boys to go to the Free Academy, in Twenty-third Street, I think it was. Free as it was, it wasn't free enough for me to go there. I had to go an' commence the struggle o' life."

And there again, I think, spoke the son of Red Reilly, in

revolt against the class that could afford leisure for education, and acutely conscious of the fact that their organs of publicity spoke of him as having "the manners and speech of the typical 'tough.'"

However, to get down to Gatecliff and his sister and the immediate personal motives behind that scene at Headquarters—

V

Big Dan, as a boy, was so large for his age that he arrived at long pants a year earlier than the others of his generation; and this made him inevitably notable among his contemporaries. He was handy with his fists, as they all were, and his size gave him a natural superiority in street fighting, which was their chief recreation. He was kindly and good-natured, so that he did not tyrannize over his companions, but fought the older bullies who would have tyrannized over them. It was so that he first championed young Buttony Gatecliff against oppression, and won the devotion of Buttony's sister.

They called him "Buttony" because he wore his knickerbockers buttoned to his roundabout. He was the timid son of a conciliatory grocer, Amos Gatecliff, who kept a shop on Hudson Street, and he was persecuted by all the little bruisers of the neighborhood, who had learned that they could blackmail him for sweets from his father's shelves by waylaying him on the streets and torturing him with threats of violence unless he brought them tribute. His life had become a continual terror. He had either to steal at home or be hunted like defenseless virtue abroad. His only protector was his

sister Mary, who escorted him whenever she could.

She was escorting him home from school one winter afternoon when he was set upon by three of his tormentors. One held her, and the others took Buttony and rubbed his face in the snow and crammed it down his collar and filled his mittens with it and stifled his outcries while they exacted promises of future bribes. Fate brought Danny Reilly on the scene. Mary Gatecliff knew him by sight; she had seen him in her father's shop buying an occasional twist of "orange pekoe" as a present for his mother. She cried out to him.

In an instant he was sprawling on the pavement, with the largest bully under him and the other two on his back. She caught Buttony to her and prevented him from running away while she stood, loyal but terrified into helplessness, watching Big Dan do battle for her. That battle was a primitive affair, bloody and furious. It was not fought according to any Queensberry rules. Dan terrified one opponent into flight by trying to bite the nose off him. He kicked another in the kneecap and all but broke his leg. The third did not wait his turn. He popped into a basement like a rat into its hole, and escaped by some back exit.

Dan picked up his cap, grinning, brushed the snow off himself, and asked her, "Which way 're yuh goin'?"

As they went she confided all Buttony's troubles to him, and he listened with a touch of that social superiority which he had always felt for the Gatecliffs. They were shopkeepers. They were ingratiatingly polite to customers. They were English, and they had English traditions of class subservience which no young Irishman of Dan's temperament could understand. He walked beside her like a sworded

D'Artagnan beside the wife of Bonacieux, the mercer of *The Three Musketeers.*

He said to her at parting, "If any o' them kids ever picks on Buttony again, you come an' tell *me.*"

She was a pale and intense little hero worshiper with black hair and large dark eyes. She raised those eyes to him in a most submissive admiration. "Thanks," she murmured, from her heart.

Thereafter Buttony was safe under Dan's protection and the protection of his gang. The word was passed around that Mary was Dan's "girl" and that any boy who gave Buttony any cause to complain of him might as well prepare to meet his day of judgment.

The gang was merely a group of a dozen boys who played and fought together as boys of a neighborhood always do. They called themselves the Hylos, for no reason that anyone remembers. Dan had found a clubroom for them in a vacant coal cellar; he had found it by merely breaking in a cellar door. They held nightly meetings there, by candlelight, with the cellar windows covered, playing cards, shooting craps, and feasting on apples, bread, bologna, pails of jam, bottles of catsup, tins of salmon or whatever else they had been able to gather during the evening. And they gathered these things as boys rob orchards, in an adventurous spirit of young deviltry.

One of them was a butcher's son, and it was his duty to steal his father's sausage. He afterward became the president of a packing company, and he always spoke of Big Dan with real affection. Another was the son of a baker, and he filched rolls and cakes. The rest went in twos and threes to make organized raids on push-cart peddlers and

the goods displayed in front of food shops. Big Dan laid out the tactics of their raids and attended to the police. He would walk up to the officer on the beat and engage him in conversation. "Purty good shine, eh?" he might say, pointing to his patron's shoes, boyish and innocent, with no sign of shrewdness in his big smile. And while the officer was being "jollied" the other Hylos would grab their loot and run. Their organized mischief annoyed the precinct for a whole winter before the police discovered that their station shoeblack was the leader of the gang—even though he once saved his confederates by accidentally tripping up an officer when the pursuit broke out prematurely.

They would occasionally "roll a rummy"; that is to say, if they met a drunken man in a quiet spot they would relieve him of any money that he had, on the pragmatic theory that they might as well have it as the first crook he met. One or two of them snatched purses, although this was forbidden by their leader except in cases where it was evident that the owner of the purse could well afford to lose it. They took part in election campaigns, pestering the cart-tail orators of the opposing party, pelting the illuminated wagons that carried "transparencies" through the streets, marching uninvited in torchlight processions, and raiding the bonfires on election nights to obtain fuel for their own rejoicings. In all these undertakings they acted like a "gang of young ruffians." But they had no idea that they were a gang of young ruffians. They thought they were merely a mutual amusement club for social recreation and innocent adventure.

They had no more idea that their street activities were criminal than they had that their pranks in the parish church

were impious. Several of them, including Big Dan, were altar boys and acolytes. They relieved the tedium of religious services by carrying their candles so as to drip hot grease on the heads of the boys in front of them, by putting bent pins on sanctuary benches and tying knots in the arms of the soutanes. They did these things while carefully maintaining the devout expressions of young cherubs in a heavenly choir, and their victims kept the same pious faces while they retaliated and defended themselves. No boy thought of appealing to the priests for protection any more than he would have thought of running to the police for aid in a street fight; it was against the code and social usage. And if the priests knew what was going on behind their backs, they ignored it—as the police usually did.

Buttony came into the Hylos under Dan's wing, and he was endured there for Dan's sake, but with no enthusiasm. The others did not like him. Smoking made him sick. He had no natural gift for profanity and he was unpleasantly ingratiating and self-conscious in its use. He was not of their religion, which made him an outlander. He stole with a tremblingly defiant air, as if he expected to be struck by lightning. And, of course, it was he who was caught.

He was arrested one night for trying to snatch a purse in emulation of a more expert associate. He was taken to the station house and locked up. As soon as Big Dan heard of it he went to the station on the general pretext of his interest in police boots, and he was caught trying to pick the lock of Buttony's cell. He was locked up, himself. Buttony, despairing of rescue, confessed the secrets of the Hylo gang to the police captain. Plain clothes men gathered in the other boys. By midnight all the Hylos were behind

bars, and the station house was besieged by their parents, their relatives, and their friends, all of whom were eloquent with the conviction of their own respectability and the prisoners' innocence.

The captain of the precinct at the time was that Joe Mehlin who afterward became Superintendent of Police and a power in opposition to Big Dan—a pompadoured, red-haired disciplinarian with light-blue eyes that looked peculiarly cold in the setting of his sandy complexion. He was resolved to be revenged on the Hylos for the trouble they had given him. He was especially set on punishing Big Dan because he had found it impossible to break the boy down, to make him penitent, to make him cower.

"You got us all wrong, Cap," Dan kept saying, cheerfully unawed. "We ain't crooks—none of us. It's a frame-up on the kid. He's no dip. An' he's so scared he don't know what he's talkin' about. He'd say anythin'."

And the captain would reply: "All right, Reilly. Then I'll send you all up. You can't make a fool o' me. You'll get five years fer this."

The other boys took their tone from Dan. His attempt to rescue Buttony had been the final act of daring that had made a melodramatic hero of him. They stood behind him solidly. It was all or none. And by morning the accumulated political influence of the whole neighborhood, its Assemblyman, its priests, and its Senator was settling down in a menacing pressure on the police captain.

He stood out so long that his final collapse was all the more humiliating to him, and he consoled himself by giving Big Dan a brutal measure of the third degree before he released the boy.

"Listen here, Cap," Reilly said, when he had reached the safety of the station-house door, "I'll get yuh fer this some day, an' I'll get yuh good."

Of course, he kept his promise. Among the people whom he represents it is a point of honor to avenge an injury as faithfully as to reward a friend. It is the whole duty of a moral life to be "no 'quitter" and "no ingrate."

And poor Buttony was forever damned in the eyes of the district by being both a quitter and an ingrate. He had confessed, and he had betrayed his friends. He tried to regain his standing in the world by recanting his confession everywhere. He told his parents that it was false, that he had been frightened into it. And Dan assisted him, at home, by assuring Mary Gatecliff that they were all innocent, particularly Buttony. She believed him; she accepted his attempt to rescue her brother as a deed of romantic faithfulness that had been done for her as much as for Buttony; and she rewarded Dan by letting him kiss her.

Her parents were less easily convinced. They saved Buttony from immediate purgatory at the hands of the Hylos by moving uptown to take him away from evil associates. Big Dan, after a touching farewell to Mary, remained to enjoy his laurels.

To tell the truth, he was relieved to have her go. She was older than he, and he had begun to find her too intense and humorless in her fixed idea of his devotion to her. He had not the temperament needed to make a humble cavalier. He forgot her, for the time.

Buttony had learned that you cannot break the law without risking punishment. Big Dan had learned that you can escape punishment if you have influence enough to control

the police. Buttony went to the Free Academy to be educated in the ethics of respectability; he studied law at Columbia; he became an agent of the Citizens' League; and he turned against his memories of his boyhood escapades with all the fervor of a convert repenting of his sins. Big Dan continued to take his education from the streets.

VI

And here we approach the real heart of his mystery. When the Hylos were forced to dissolve, by the continued intrusion of the police, Dan and his older followers were absorbed by the James Phelan Athletic Association—which was athletic in the way that the Y. M. C. A. is athletic, and political as the Y. M. C. A. is religious. Its two glories were Jimmy Phelan, the district leader, and Kid McCann, the champion lightweight. Its membership included the politicians, the ward heelers, the pugilists, the gamblers, the professional crooks, the young sports, the political aspirants, and all the doubtful light and leading of the district. In its rooms and on the streets, after working hours, Big Dan became familiar with every form of common vice. Yet he practiced none of them. Why?

He had promised his mother that he would not use either tobacco or alcohol until he was twenty-one, but why did he keep the promise? He had directed the Hylos in all their boyish raids and depredations, but why did he never join in their petty thieving? The young bloods of the Phelan Association put him in the way of becoming a prize fighter and trained him for the ring. Why did he never take to that ambition? Why did he continue working in the press room

on Park Row until he was elected Assemblyman from his district? What was the secret of his strength of will that carried him to one ambition and not to another, that kept him above weaknesses which he never seemed to condemn, that made him the king of the underworld—as it had made him the leader of the Hylos—but preserved him from being, in the professional sense of the word, a "crook"?

Well, Big Dan, even as a child, had a bodily superiority that made him admired and complimented, and I believe it was this first sense of physical importance that formed the backbone of his personality. His early leadership among his companions must have confirmed his innate conviction of natural eminence. Certainly he developed a sort of instinct of aristocracy that showed in his mother, too, in her inordinate almsgiving. As the head of the Hylos, he refrained from the thieving as the foreman of a work gang refrains from work. When Buttony was arrested and Dan went to release him, it was from an obvious impulse of *noblesse oblige*. His promise that he would not smoke or drink he kept, as a boy, because he was fond of his mother; and he kept it, as he grew older, because his habits of abstinence were habits of which he became proud, since they were *his* habits, and different from the prevailing habits around him. Moreover, in his experience of life, drunkenness was a form of weakness of which the predatory took advantage —as the Hylos rolled a rummy—and all those in his circle who pandered to vice exploited similar weaknesses. Big Dan had no intention of allowing himself to be exploited, and some obscure sense of responsibility for the weak prevented him from becoming an exploiter of them. He accepted training as a pugilist until he was expert enough to make anyone

respect his blows, but he went no farther; he balked at being the fighting cock of a group of prize-ring promoters. He became one of the stalwarts who did the "strong-arm" work about the polls, prevented members of the opposing party from casting their votes, and supplied the consequent vacancy with a loyal impersonator when a rival voter had been carried home. Among his people, this sort of activity is regarded as good exercise for a growing lad, and Big Dan took plenty of it. But he did not himself impersonate; he was too conspicuous, physically. When he became ward captain he did not, himself, buy votes; he received the money and disbursed it to his craftier lieutenants. And his sense of superiority and of responsibility slowly promoted him to a leadership and an authority which his amiable good nature kept beneficent and popular.

His mother aided him throughout. Her pride in him was colossal; she may have helped to lay the foundations of his nature with that pride. She trusted him and leaned on him even in his school days; and it may have been this that made him responsible. She was a wise judge of character; she knew the affairs of the whole neighborhood; and her gossip was an education to him. When she gave anything out of her charity, she always said, "This is from Danny, now," and Danny got the credit of it. When he became captain of his ward, she acted as his chief of staff and busied herself all day "lookin' to his finces" as she called it, while he was away at his work. She reported to him at supper, while he ate her cooking, and he would say, grinning: "If *you* ain't the crafty one! Would yuh like to run fer the Presidency? Tip me the wink an' I'll speak to Phelan."

"You an' yer Phelan," she would reply. "I c'u'd get it from *him* quicker than yeh c'u'd, yerself.

"That's true enough, y' ol' ward heeler," he would admit. And it was.

Their intercourse was conducted in this disrespectful tone of rough banter that served to disguise the shamefacedness of an idolatrous love.

She had been prematurely gray as a young woman. Now she was white haired. Dan called her "Granny" to tease her, and she had become "Granny" affectionately to the whole ward. They came to her for every sort of advice and assistance. They came to her with their quarrels, and she listened to both sides and sympathized with both, but joined neither. It was her private boast that she had never had a quarrel in her life. She had an inexhaustible tolerance, and I do not believe she ever passed an adverse moral judgment on anybody who was not rich. "Poor people has to make a livin'," she would say, in forgiveness of all her neighbors' notorious delinquencies; and yet she was a devout churchgoer and prayed for Danny morning, noon, and night.

She was popular with the mothers, who are the real heads of the families in the tenements. The men are too often stupefied by hard labor and alcoholic recreation. They are less ambitious than their wives; they have a weaker sense of responsibility to their children; they do not endure poverty so hardily; they die younger. "Granny" Reilly was the confidante and adviser, the visiting nurse and Lady Bountiful, of every mother, wife, and widow in the neighborhood; and they were all "for her" and for her son. It was her influence as much as anything that elected him to the legislature.

VII

That happened in 1887, when he was twenty-four years old. And one of the first results of it was to bring Mary Gatecliff back into his life. She wrote, congratulating him on his election, formally. He went to call on her, because he was an awkward letter writer and he had self-confidence enough to go anywhere. He did not hesitate even when he found the Gatecliffs living on West Twenty-third Street in one of the houses of London Terrace that still maintained the tradition of the row's earlier magnificence.

Gatecliff had become a wholesale grocer, with a string of retail shops; his wife had developed formal manners and a complete loss of hearing; Buttony had married a daughter of money and moved still farther uptown; and Mary Gatecliff was not at all the youngster who had kissed Dan good-by in the hallway on Hudson Street. She had been to a finishing school. She was meditatively quiet, a solitary reader, silent and observant. It seemed impossible that she could ever have any but a feeling of kindly superiority for Big Dan. She probably thought that she had written to him out of such a feeling.

But Dan had once roused in her a tumultuous emotion, and he was the only man who had. That, I think, is the explanation of the affair that followed—one of those mysterious love affairs that are the despair of parents and the scandal of friends. Her intelligence had been educated out of all sympathy with him, but there was something else in her that had not. Her emotions responded to their old stimulus at sight of him, and she was struck with a flush and thrill that startled her. His voice shook her; she did

not know why. He was aware of it. He had a compelling tone of confident familiarity, and he took her hand, smiling at her. He called her "Mary" cheerfully, and talked to her about her former neighbors and old times, with laughter. He seemed genuinely big hearted, human, rough, and winning. He was humorous about himself and his mother and his political "spiels" and his career. "She's so pop'lar," he said, "that they've elected *me*. I tell her she'll have to gi' me her proxy so's I c'n vote." And while Mary Gatecliff was critical of his slurred speech and his "Bowery mannerisms," she forgave them because, in the back of her mind, she was thinking that they could be easily corrected.

She parted from him with a girlish friendliness of manner that would have seemed impossible to her a few hours earlier. She hurried to bed and then lay awake, excited, far into the night, with her reason apparently cool about him, but her emotions deeply stirred.

And it was not many days before her reason took the tone of her emotion. She believed that Abraham Lincoln might have been such a young politician as Dan if Lincoln had been less melancholy. Dan was of the people, uneducated, a poor boy; but she knew that most of the leaders of the nation had been that. She began to feel that what he most needed was a friend with high ideals and the culture of a better class to influence and guide him.

She wrote him again, sending him a book of which she had spoken to him. Her father saw him on his second visit, but her father's business had given him a great respect for the financial virtue of political influence, and he was pleasant to the young Assemblyman. Her mother saw him; but her mother, being deaf, talked unceasingly to cover her in-

firmity. She seemed rather more than pleasant. Dan was used to having people pleasant to him; it did not impress him. Mary talked to him of his plans and his ambitions, with an encouraging interest. He was not unused to young feminine interest, either. He jollied her as he jollied his mother; and because he was leaving for Albany next day he put his arm around her at parting, and kissed her good-by as he might have kissed his mother.

She wrote him in Albany, a letter that accepted her surrender to his caress as if it had been the last surrender of love. He was deeply moved by it. It was the sort of letter that only an intense and idealistic girl can write when all her barriers are broken down. Dan replied clumsily, jocularly, but in terms which he had never before been able to use to anyone but his mother.

VIII

He arrived at the legislature like a fraternity athlete entering a college where friends have preceded him. It was a legislature that was acclaimed by the newspapers of the day the "most corrupt, discreditable, unprincipled, and venal that ever assembled in the capital of any civilized community." Big Dan and his friends were as little worried by that criticism as if they were the class of '87 being scolded by their teachers. He attended committee meetings and debates as a college "sport" attends lectures. He had nothing but good-natured contempt for Buttony Gatecliff—now Harold A. Gatecliff, agent of the Citizens' League—whom he found lobbying in support of various reform measures. In Dan's eyes Gatecliff had become a studious and spectacled prig, and

after one unpleasant interview they agreed to go their separate ways. It never occurred to Dan that Buttony might be dangerous. And he did not mention Mary to him. That, he thought, was no affair of Buttony's.

The legislators were "doing business on a basis of from five dollars upward." Some of the upstate members were quoted at one hundred dollars each. Big Dan organized a "union to maintain prices" among the New York and Brooklyn members, and they got as high as five hundred dollars each for their votes. They helped to pass a bill to free insurance companies from back taxes of $700,000 and future taxes of $200,000 a year. Big Dan voted for it gayly. He voted to expend a million and a half for patent ballot boxes, to the sole profit of the firm that made them and the members who voted for them. For his constituency he obtained a free public bath and permission for newspaper vendors to erect news stands "within the stoop line" on New York City streets. He helped to introduce a number of "strike bills" —which are bills threatening to penalize corporations that are rich enough and timid enough to pay for immunity. He made his mark as a humorist at committee meetings. His union to maintain prices became known as "the Black Horse Cavalry," and he led it as ably as he had led the Hylos. He had more money than his mother could give away; he bought her an old red-brick house in the Greenwich Village quarter; and he financed his first saloon, with one of his boyhood friends as its proprietor. His political influence protected it from the police. Altogether, his first year in the legislature was happy and profitable in a boyish and innocent sort of way—"innocent" in *his* eyes, that is.

His affair with Mary Gatecliff ran along less happily for

her than for him, since she found herself committed to a man who remained obviously more free than she. His affection had no vows. It did not even find words for itself. And it masked its sincerity in boyish grins and clumsy playfulness. She trembled when he kissed her, suffocated by the beating of her heart; and then she wept, when he was gone, because she could neither resist him nor apparently make him respect the weakness that yielded to him. She denied her feeling for him to her father. She could not, in self-respect, admit the humiliating terms of it. "We're just friends," she said.

Love, to her, was something abstract and transcendental, of the nature of a religion, exacting in its worship and rather solemn. To Dan it was a merely human relation. He took her affection as he took his mother's. He repaid it—as he repaid his mother's—with rough kindliness when he was with her and devoted thoughts when he was away. And he left the unconsidered future to develop itself and their relations, sure of himself and his success.

IX

So he came to the crisis and the turning point in his career. Imagine him a burly twenty-six, rubicund and round-faced, well dressed, prosperous, known to everybody in his district and liked by them all. His passage down his native street was a triumphal progress. The policeman on the beat saluted him. The loafers on the saloon corners stopped him to borrow money. The street children pointed him out and followed him. The shopkeepers shook hands with him. He was buttonholed and solicited by constituents

and office seekers, and he released himself with a broad smile and a pat on the shoulder and such promises as he knew he could keep. He smiled at the girls, with his hat on the back of his head. He touched the brim of it with a wave of the hand when their mothers greeted him. He joked with the priest. A universal favorite, as kindly as a prince who wishes to be popular, he walked with the sun on his face and a prosperous future before him. And he never looked back at the past that followed him—an invisible figure, which he thought nobody saw, because he never looked at it himself—until suddenly that figure stepped up beside him, took his arm firmly, and walked him into a future that was a sinister counterfeit of all he had expected.

There was to be a centennial celebration in New York City in 1889, and in April of that year a bill was introduced at Albany to give the city police the power to arrest suspected criminals at sight, so as to protect the centennial crowds from pickpockets and street walkers and hold-up men. Big Dan opposed the bill on the legitimate grounds that no man or woman should be arrested unless upon specific charges. He fought the bill in committee. He fought it on the floor of the house. He rallied his Black Horse Cavalry against it, traded influence to defeat it, and "swapped" votes.

Unfortunately, Inspector Mehlin was behind the bill, and so was the Citizens' League. Mehlin called in the newspaper men and gave them an interview in which he described Big Dan as "the associate of thieves and criminals," "a political crook, prize fighter, and strong-arm man," "opposed to the bill because all the criminals were his friends and if the bill went through it would hurt his saloon business." And the secretary of the Citizens' League followed with a sketch

of Big Dan's life, supplied by Gatecliff: "Born amid the most depraved surroundings . . . the leader of a gang of young ruffians known to the police as the Hylo gang . . . his manners and speech those of the typical 'tough' . . . the companion of thieves and prostitutes . . . his saloons their known resorts . . . perhaps the most dangerous man that New York City ever sent to Albany . . . the recognized leader of that group of piratical Assemblymen known as 'the Black Horse Cavalry' . . . the king of the underworld . . . a political brigand holding his followers together by the cohesive power of public plunder," etc., etc.

Big Dan woke next morning to find himself infamous. In vain he denied the statements on the floor of the house. He was not convincing. He would not desert his friends, Barney This and Fitzey That, thieves and burglars, whom Mehlin had named. He admitted that he knew them, but denied that his friendship was guilty. He could not deny his leadership of the Black Horse. Not to their faces. He spoke lamely and confusedly. He defeated the bill, but he did not clear himself. He could not. Mehlin had made too picturesque and colorful a figure of him. The Albany correspondents took it up. The editorial writers enlarged on it. And Dan's place in the social system was forever fixed.

He did not realize it. It was years before he realized it.

Mary Gatecliff saw her brother, learned the truth, about the Hylos and about the legislature, and wrote to Dan: "It is terrible. There is nothing I can say. Do not come again. I could not trust myself to speak to you." And when he called she would not see him; and when he wrote she did not answer.

That cut him to the vitals. He could not picture any cir-

cumstances in which he would have turned his back on Mary before her enemies. It put her in a class with her brother; they had a "yellow streak."

Dan's criminal associates had not. They rallied to him. They elected him vice-president of the Phelan Association, and made speeches to him as "the man who never went back on a friend." The underworld had found a champion; they crowded to his saloon. The neighbors came to assure his mother that whatever the lying police and the newspapers might say, they knew that Danny was a good boy. Most significant of all, Cass Harley came.

And with Cass Harley, Dan's future took him by the arm. Harley was then a corporation lawyer, lobbyist, and "fixer." The Black Horse Cavalry had been worrying him and his clients. He came to make peace. He came to offer Dan an alliance with the financial powers upon whom, as a piratical Assemblyman, Dan had been preying.

"We need a leader in the legislature, Dan," he said. "The boys won't follow Cassidy. You and your friends had us blocked a half dozen times last session, and it's going to be worse now. We need you and we can take care of you."

Dan asked, only, "Can you get Mehlin fer me?"

"Yes," Harley promised, "we can get Mehlin. And we can stop most of this newspaper stuff."

"I don't care about the papers," Dan said. "They can't hurt me down here. But I want Mehlin's scalp. He lied about me."

"We all know that," Harley assured him, although he was there because he believed what Mehlin had said. "Tell me, can we help your organizations in any way? Need any campaign contributions?"

"I'll see y' about that later." Dan rose heavily, to end the interview. "Get Mehlin first."

Harley nodded. "It may take me a little time. I'll begin right away."

He "got" Mehlin. He got him so painfully that Mehlin came to Dan, in an attempt to save himself, and apologized and begged for his place. That simply made him a "quitter." Dan went down into his change pocket and drew out some silver.

"Mehlin," he said, "you once ga' me a quarter more'n I'd earned blackin' boots. It was the only decent thing y' ever did. Take it, an' get out before I throw y' out. We're quits."

Here was Reilly's first conspicuous public display of power. It marked him as an autocrat to the underworld. It brought a thousand willing agents to his service. And with these adherents at one end of the social system and Cass Harley and his clients at the other, he was supported by a combination of influence that was invincible. He was made the political boss of his district. He was no longer "Big Dan"; he was "the Big One." When Jimmy Phelan died, the Phelan Association became the Dan Reilly Association, with Granny Reilly as the empress dowager behind the throne. Under her direction as much as Dan's, it developed into a political association for the distribution of discriminating alms. An official chaplain attended marriages, christenings, and funerals to leave flowers "from Big Dan." A dispossessman went to court every morning for lists of evicted tenants and gave them aid. A recognized place finder occupied himself getting work for voters from every business man and corporation in New York that could be reached by the Big

(One; and with Cass Harley to assist, there were few that could not be reached. But, unlike any of his predecessors in such a situation, Reilly did not sell out to the powers whom Harley served. He did not even lose himself among the higher-ups. He stuck to his district. He spoke of sacred Headquarters as "the dead man's rest," and kept away from it. He poured great sums of money through the Dan Reilly Association into the needy purses of his constituents, and took from them, in return, their votes. Thanks to his mother, he had made, unconsciously, an important discovery in the science of democratic government—a discovery that put him at last on the balcony at Headquarters. It was this:

Among business men, farmers, manufacturers, and such, a voter marks his ballot in support of the party that gives him either a policy or a tariff to protect his livelihood. But there are no farmers or manufacturers or accumulations of invested capital among the tenement dwellers. When those people vote for the party that assures their livelihood, they vote for the party that gives them jobs. Big Dan's political machine became an organization that gave the workingman, the poor, the unemployed, and the petty criminal work or money or protection in exchange for their votes. Reilly became the Hanna of his party, locally.

He was soon dictating to Cass Harley; and Harley, angered, assisted the newspapers and the Citizens' League in an attempt to destroy him. They made the Big One a social outlaw, as picturesque as Robin Hood; but he polled an overwhelming vote in his district, dictated terms to Harley's clients, and ended Harley's political career. Then he reached for the principal backers of the Citizens' League and forced them to drop Gatecliff, who as its secretary, had directed the

publicity against him. He even fought the party Boss and defeated him in a characteristic activity.

The Boss was interested in horse breeding and racing; his henchmen introduced a bill at Albany to suppress pool rooms because pool rooms hurt the race tracks by making it unnecessary to go to the races in order to bet; and Reilly, leading the pool room forces, proposed another bill making all betting illegal, whether on the tracks or in the pool rooms. The reformers flocked to Reilly's support. The Boss, in order to get Big Dan to withdraw his bill, had to withdraw his own. He never forgave Big Dan and was never asked to. "What do I care fer Headquarters," Reilly laughed. "I can carry my distric' whether I'm in th' organization er not." He carried it when a reform wave engulfed the party in every other district of the city, and it was he who served notice on the Boss that his abdication was expected as a consequence of that defeat.

He was now at the point where he should have been able to assume the crown of his career. And he could not touch it. Mehlin and Gatecliff and Cass Harley and the Citizens' League had done their work too well. The rival leaders at Headquarters could not oppose his power, but they did not conceal from him the obvious fact that to put a man of his reputation on the party throne would mean the public ruin of the party. The reform wave was still running high.

"Better fake up a stool pigeon, Dan," they advised him, "an' work behind him till this blows over. We know it ain't true, what they say of yuh. But the public don't know it."

In the secret silences of his thought he blamed it all on Gatecliff, and whatever business or undertaking Gatecliff en-

ttered on he contrived to blight it, mysteriously. Mary Gatecliff tried to see him. She wrote to ask for an interview. He did not answer. She persisted with a letter begging him not to ruin her brother. He muttered, "What do you two think yuh've done to *me?*" and threw the letter in the waste basket.

When Mary married the head of the traction company, he watched for Buttony to appear in the company's affairs; and when Gatecliff showed as a confidential legal adviser to the president of the concern, Dan set a new trap in the shape of a traction franchise with which he intended to "gold brick" them. Gatecliff, persecuted as he had been in his youth, was willing again to pay tribute. He undertook negotiations with Headquarters, and Dan handed him over to a lieutenant. The price was agreed upon, but the company offered stock, and Dan would not move except for half the amount in ready money paid in advance. He planned to accept that bribe and then secretly to manipulate the legislature to refuse the franchise. The traction heads had to take his word as his bond. He had never broken his word in the past, and everybody knew it.

X

It was toward the end of these negotiations that he came to his dramatic moment on the Headquarters stairs.

He came there in black because he had been to the funeral of his mother. He came there feeling suddenly empty, bitter, resentful—empty of all ambition to remain in control at Headquarters, now that his mother was no longer alive to be proud of his power; bitter because of the public obloquy under which both he and his mother had suffered; and re-

sentful toward those best men of the community who dreaded him, despised him, and waited on him. As he had walked down the aisle of the church, behind his mother's coffin, he had seen Mary Gatecliff in a pew, and she had looked at him with sympathy, with pity, with a pleading reproach. He had said to himself, "Her husband made her come, to jolly me along." But he knew better. Her eyes were the strained eyes of a victim of disillusion, looking at a fellow sufferer in unhappiness, and mutely asking him, in the face of death, why they had so maimed each other's lives.

The look accused him and accused herself. It forgave him and asked forgiveness. And with that look in his memory he paused on the railed landing of the stairs and saw her brother and her husband below him, waiting hopefully for the word from him that would spring the fall of his trap. He despised them. He was ashamed of himself and of them. He wanted to insult them contemptuously while he saved them. And he wanted to slap their whole respected world in the face. And he slapped it. "The rest o' yuh can go home."

XI

It was his last official act at Headquarters. "I'm sick," he told the man who was to succeed him. "An' I'm through here. That deal with Gatecliff and his bunch, that's off. If anyone wants to see me, tell 'em to go to hell."

He retired to one of his Bowery lairs and took to his bed. The painted woman who was nursing him persuaded him to drink some hot toddy, to put him to sleep. It went to his head and he talked of his mother.

"I had a funny feelin' up there at the cemet'ry," he said. "They buried her on the side of a hill. An' the sun was shinin'. An' they dug the grave like a box, cuttin' it down straight on the sides an' makin' the corners square, *you* know, like a box. An' the shell just fitted into it like it was made fer it. An' there was somethin' about the look o' that grave, an' the way it was made, that all of a sudden made me feel contented about havin' her in it—somethin', *you* know, consolin'. An' when they lowered her into it the shell fitted so tight that the air came up slow, an' when she settled down in it it made a sort o' sigh, like you're happy." He began to weep. "I never knew a grave c'u'd be like that. It—it looked comfor'ble."

"Now," the woman said, impatiently, "you ain't goin' to talk about graves bein' comfortable. You ain't as sick as all that. You got nothin' but a cold."

And Big Dan, like a great child, motherless, rolled over and covered his face with the pillow and sobbed.

XII

One of the frankest of our foreign critics wrote of Dan at the height of his power: "He is a living proof that the workingman believes he has the same right to vote for work that the business man has to vote for trade. He indicates that in a democracy where all are politically free the wage slave will sell his political freedom to ameliorate the conditions of his economic servitude. He signifies that poverty can organize and follow its leader and plunder property unabashed by all the moral fulminations of its victim. He means that no reform movement can permanently defeat his kind until

the reformers recognize that the voter on the lower East Side has the same right to sell his vote for a wage as the voter on the upper West Side has to sell his vote for an income."

And all of that may be true, but I think if this social philosopher had seen Dan blubbering into a pillow, he might have understood that the Big One was what he was because he had never been anything but an overgrown boy, with merely boyish ideals of loyalty to his gang, with a boy's immature sense of responsibility to society, with all a boy's unsocialized ego instincts, and a boy's dependence on affection, and a boy's hatred for his censors, and a boy's revolt against his punishment.

JETSAM [1]

by JOHN RUSSELL

IT is likely that at some time in his extreme youth Junius Peabody was introduced to those single-minded creatures, the ant and the bee. Doubtless he was instructed in the highly moral lessons they are supposed to illustrate to the inquiring mind of childhood. But it is certain he never profited by the acquaintance—indeed, the contemplation of such tenacious industry must have afflicted his infant consciousness with utter repugnance. By the time he was twenty-seven the only living thing that could be said to have served him as a model was the jellyfish.

Now the jellyfish pursues a most amiable theory of life, being harmless, humorous, and decorative. It derives much enjoyment from drifting along through the glitter and froth, as chance may direct. It does no work to speak of. It never needs to get anywhere. And it never, never has to go thirsty. But some day it may get itself stranded, and then the poor jellyfish becomes an object quite worthless and fit only to be shoveled out of sight as soon as possible—because it lacks the use of its legs.

Thus it was with Junius Peabody, who awoke one morning

1 From *Where the Pavement Ends,* by John Russell. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1919, by John Russell. By permission of Brandt & Brandt.

of his twenty-eighth year on the roaring coral beach at Fufuti below Bendemeer's place to find that all the chances had run out and that the glitter had faded finally from a prospect as drab as the dawn spread over a butternut sea before him. . . .

Mr. Peabody sat up and looked about from under a corrugated brow and yawned and shivered. His nerves had been reduced to shreds, and even the fiercest heat of tropic suns seemed never to warm him, a symptom familiar enough to brandy drunkards. But he had had such awakenings before, many of them, and the chill that struck through him on this particular morning was worse than any hangover. It was the soul of Junius Peabody that felt cold and sick, and when he fumbled through his pockets—the subtle relation between the pockets and the soul is a point sadly neglected by our best little psychologists—he uncovered a very definite reason. His last penny was gone.

Under the shock of conviction, Mr. Peabody sought to cast up the mental log, in the hope of determining where he was and how he came to be there.

The entries were badly blurred, but he could trace himself down through Port Said, Colombo, Singapore—his recollections here were limited to a woman's face in a balcony and the cloying aroma of anisette. He remembered a stop at Sydney, where he made the remarkable discovery that the Circular Quay was completely circular and could be circumnavigated in a night. After that he had a sketchy impression of the Shanghai race meeting and a mad sort of trip in a private yacht full of Australian sheep-something—kings, perhaps; tremendous fellows, anyway, of amazing capacity. And then Manila, of course, the place where he hired an

ocean-going tug to urge a broken date on the coy ingénue of a traveling Spanish opera company. And then Macao, where he found and lost her again, as coy as ever, together with his wallet. And after that the hectic session when he and a Norwegian schooner captain hit the bank at fan-tan and swore eternal friendship amid the champagne baskets on the schooner's decks under a complicated moon. It was this same captain who had landed him finally—the baskets having been emptied—at the point of a boot on the strand where now he sat. So much was still quite clear and recent, within range of days.

Always through the maze of these memoirs ran one consistent and tragic motive—a dwindling letter of credit, the fag end of his considerable patrimony. It had expired painlessly at last, the night before if he could trust his head, for there had been a noble wake. He recalled the inscrutable face of the tall white man behind the bar who had cashed it for him after a rate of exchange of his own grim devising. And he recalled, too, a waif bit of their conversation as he signed the ultimate coupon.

"You can date it Fufuti," suggested Bendemeer, and spelled the name for him.

"And where—where the devil is Fufuti?" he asked.

"Three thousand miles from the next pub," said Bendemeer, with excessively dry significance.

The phrase came back to him now. . . .

"In that case," decided Junius Peabody, aloud, "—in that case there's no use trying to borrow car fare, and it's too far to walk. I'm stuck."

Some one sniffed beside him, and he turned to stare into a face that might have been a distortion of his own yellow, haggard image.

"Hello," he said—and then, by natural sequence: "say, you don't happen to have a flask anywhere handy about you —what?"

His neighbor scowled aggrievedly.

"Do I *look* like I 'ad a flask?"

The belligerent whine was enough to renew the identity of the mangy little larrikin whose couch on the sand he had shared. The Sydney Duck, they called him: a descriptive title which served as well as any. Junius did not like him very well, but he had lived in his company nearly a week and he had long forgotten to make effective distinctions. Brandy is a great democrat.

"It's my notion I'm going to have the fantods," explained Junius. "I need a bracer."

"My word, I could do with a nip meself just now," agreed Sydney. " 'In't y' got no more credit with Bendemeer?"

Peabody made an effort.

"Seems to me I was thrown out of Bendemeer's last night. Is that right?"

"You was, and so was me and that big Dutchman, Willems —all thrown out. But it was your fault. You started playin' chuck farthin' among his bottles with a bunch of copper spikes. . . . I never see a man 'old his liquor worse."

"Well, I paid for it, didn't I?" inquired Junius, without heat. "And I believe you had your share. But what I'm getting at is—if he threw me out the credit must be gone."

This was simple logic and unanswerable. "Maybe y' got something else he'll tyke for th' price," suggested Sydney. "Damn 'im—'e's keen enough to drive a tryde!"

Junius went through the form of searching, but without any great enthusiasm, nor was Sydney himself notably expectant—a fact that might have seemed to argue a rather sinister familiarity with the probable result.

"I did have some cuff links and things," said Peabody vaguely. "I wonder what's become of them."

"I wonder," echoed Sydney. As if some last possible claim upon his regard had been dissipated, he let his lips writhe in mockery. "Ah, and that's a pity too. You got to learn now what it means bein' on the beach and doin' *without* drinks—'cept as you kin cadge them off'n 'alf-caste Chinymen and such. You won't like it, you won't."

"Do you?" asked Junius.

"Me? I'm used to it. But, Lord, look at them 'ands! I'll lay you never did a day's work in your life."

"Did you?" inquired Junius Peabody equably.

"Garn!" retorted Sydney with a peculiarly unlovely sneer. "W'y, you don't know yet what you've come to, you don't. 'Jaimes, fetch me me mornin' drawft!'—that's your style. Only there 'in't no Jaimes no more, and no drawfts to be 'ad. Ho! . . . You're only a beachcomber now, mytey. A lousy beachcomber! And you needn't expect me to do none of your beggin' for you, for I won't—no fear!"

Junius observed him with attention, with rather more attention than he could remember having bestowed upon any specific object for a long time. He examined the features of the Sydney Duck, the undue prominence of nose and upper lip, the singularly sharp ridge of the whole front face—whittled, as it might have been; the thin, pink ears and the jutting teeth that gave him something of the feeble ferocity

of a rat. And with new perception he saw Sydney Duck, not only as an unpleasant individual but as a type, the fitting comrade and associate for such as he.

"It's a fact," said Junius Peabody; "I've fallen pretty low. . . ."

He looked out again upon that unprofitable dawning. To right and left stretched the flat, dim monotony of the beach, lined in misty surf and hedged with slim palms like a tufted palisade. From behind drifted the smokes from scores of homely hearths. Down by Tenbow Head the first pearling luggers were putting out under silver clouds of sail. Sea and land stirred once more with the accustomed affairs of busy men, but here between land and sea was the fringe of things, the deserted domain of wreckage and cast-off remnants. Here lay a broken spar half buried in the sand, part of the complex fabric that once enabled some fair ship to skim the waves. And here among the kelp and the bodies of marine animals he saw the loosened staves of a barrel limply spread and upthrust like the fingers of some dead giant, with an empty bottle near by as if fallen from that slack grip. And here, lastly, he was aware of Junius Peabody, also on the beach, washed up at the far edge of the world like any other useless bit of jetsam: to stay and to rot.

"Pretty low," said Junius Peabody.

But Sydney took no offense, and seemed, on the contrary, to extract a certain degree of pleasure from the other's recognition of his lot.

"Oh, it 'in't so bad," he declared, with a quite human impulse to reverse the picture. "There's easy pickin' if you know 'ow. Nobody starves 'ere anyw'y, that's one thing.

No nigger will let a man starve—a soft lot of flats that w'y, the niggers. Often you fall in with a weddin' or a birthday or somethin'; they're always 'avin' a feast and *they* don't care who comes—they 'in't proud. Then you got nobody aharryin' of you up and down and askin' you wot for, that's a comfort—my word! And once in a while there's sure to be a new chum come along with a bit of brass—some flat who's willin' to stand the drinks."

"Like me," suggested Junius.

"Oh, there's plenty like you," nodded the Sydney Duck. "It's the pearlin' brings them, though it 'in't so soft as maybe they think, you see. When they're stony they mostly tyke a job till they find a chance to get aw'y again—that's if they're able to do anything at all."

For the first time in his life, probably, Junius Peabody considered his accomplishments with a view to estimating their value in the open market.

"I once won the fancy diving event at Travers Island," he said. "And I used the swim the four-forty in a trifle over six minutes."

"That must 'a' been several seasons back," grinned Sydney.

"Not so many," said Junius slowly. "I forgot to add that I was also an excellent judge of French brandy."

He got to his feet and began to divest himself of the spotted remains of an expensive white silk suit.

"What's the gyme now?"

"Morning bath. Have you had yours yet?"

The Sydney Duck laughed, laughter that was strangely unmirthful and so convulsive that Junius blinked at him, fearing a fit of some kind.

"You're a rare 'un," gasped the Sydney Duck. "I seen a

good few, I 'ave, but none as rare as you. Mornin' bawth—and 'ave I 'ad mine yet! . . . On the beach at Fufuti!" He waggled his hands.

"Well, if it seems so queer as all that why not blow yourself?" offered Junius with perfect good nature. "You can't tell, you might like it. Come along."

"Garn!" snarled the other.

So Junius turned away and walked down the strand alone. Outward the ground swell broke and came rushing in with long-spaced undulations, and as he stood at the verge, shrinking in his nakedness, the east flamed suddenly through its great red archway and turned all the world to tinted glory. Fair across to him was flung a shining path. It seemed as if he had only to step out along that straight way of escape, and for an instant he had a yearning to try. Never in his life had he followed a single course to a definite end, and what could be better now than to choose one at last, to follow, to go on following—and not to return.

He looked down at his body and saw as a revelation the pitiful wasting of his strength—how scrawny he was of limb, how bloated about the middle, and his skin how soft and leprous white. He made an ugly figure under the clear light of the morning, like the decaying things around him, where the carrion flies were beginning to swarm in the sun. And there came upon him then a sudden physical loathing of himself, a final sense of disaster and defeat.

"If I could only begin again—" thought Junius Peabody, and stopped and laughed aloud at the wish, which is old as folly and futile as sin. But he had no relief from laughter

either, for it was the same he had just heard from the Sydney Duck, a sort of hiccup. So he stopped that too and strode forthright into the wash. . . .

Something flung against his shin and tripped him. He sprawled awkwardly from a singular impact, soft though quite solid. He could see the object floating on the next wave and was curious enough to catch it up. It was a rough lump of some substance, a dirty grayish-brown in color, the size of a boy's football. The touch of it was rather greasy.

Junius stayed with the trove in his hands and the tingling of an odd excitement in his mind. His first instinct rejected the evidence. He had a natural suspicion that events do not happen so. But while he brought to bear such knowledge as he owned, facts read or heard, he found himself still thrilled.

There was a sound from the shore and the Sydney Duck hurried up behind him to the edge of the water, both hands clawed, his little eyes distended.

"You've got it!" He took two steps after a retreating wave, but the next drove him hopping. It was strange to see the fellow drawn by a frantic eagerness and chased again by the merest flicker of foam, lifting his feet as gingerly as a cat.

"What have I got?" asked Junius, standing at midthigh where the surf creamed in between them.

"It's the stuff! Chuck it over—wha-i-i!" Sydney's voice rose to a squeal as a frothing ripple caught his toes.

Junius came wading shoreward, but he did not relinquish the lump when the other felt and paddled it feverishly, babbling.

"Look at that—look at that! All smooth an' soft—an'

kind of slimy, like. Oh, no, we 'in't struck it fair rich this time, nor nothin'—oh, *now!* . . . Mytey, I tell you—by Gaw', I tell you it's the real stuff!"

"But oughtn't there be an odor—a perfume?"

"Not yet—not while it's fresh. That comes after. And any'ow, what else could it be—'ey?"

Junius shook his head.

" 'Ere, I'll show you, you poor flat!" The larrikin raged about like a man in a strong temper. "Where's a nail? Gimme a nail, a long nail, or a piece of wire—'ell, I'll show you!"

He snatched up a strip of planking from the sand and wrenched a rusty spike from it. With swift jerky gestures he gathered a few dry chips and splinters, whipped a match, and set them alight. In this brief blaze he heated the spike and then applied it to the lump. It sank smoothly, leaving a little melted ring around the hole.

"Ambergris!" he yelped. "Worth near two pound an ounce, right 'ere in Fufuti. . . . And the 'arf of it's mine," he added, with a startling shift to the most brazen impudence.

Junius regarded him, incredulous.

"What? That's wot! Wasn't I here? 'In't I been pallin' along of you? It's a fair divvy. W'y, damn your soul," he screamed in a sudden febrile blast of fury, "you don't think you're goin' to 'og my 'arf an' all!"

"*Your* half!" repeated Junius. "Huh—nothing small about you, is there? Why, you weren't anywhere near when I found it. Didn't you pass up the swim?"

Just here the Sydney Duck made his mistake. Had he proceeded with any finesse, with any understanding of his man, he might have done about as he pleased and it is likely

that little of moment would have transpired on Fufuti beach that morning. But he acted by his lights, which were narrow and direct, and he hit Junius Peabody suddenly in the smiling face of him and knocked him reeling backward. The next instant he was running for the nearest palms with the prize tucked under one arm.

Junius sat on the sand and blinked, and at first he felt rather hurt, for he was not used to being treated so, at least not while he was sober. And thereafter he grinned, for such was his way of turning aside a casual unpleasantness, and the thing undeniably had its humorous aspect. But finally came the throb of a strange new emotion, as if some one had planted a small, hot coal in his breast.

It is a fact worthy of note that never before had Junius Peabody known the sting of a living anger. But never before had Junius Peabody been reduced to a naked Junius Peabody, dot and carry nothing—penniless, desperate, and now cheated of a last hope. That made the difference.

"Hey!" he protested. "See here, you know—Dammit!"

He struggled up and climbed anyhow into trousers, coat and shoes, and set off at a shambling trot, with no clear notion of what he meant to do but keeping the larrikin in sight.

Sydney dodged in among the trees, found them too scant for cover, paused to fling a yellow snarl over his shoulder, and swung up the shore. He turned, questing here and there, shouting as he ran, and presently raised an answering shout from a hollow whence another figure started up to join him, a bearded, heavy-set rogue, whose abnormally long arms dangled like an ape's out of his sleeveless shirt. Junius recognized Willems, the third of their party the night before, and

he knew where the interest of that sullen big Hollander would lie. He had a coalition of thievery against him now. The two beachcombers ran on together, footing briskly past the long boat sheds and the high white veranda of Bendemeer's place. . . .

Under this iron thatch stood the man Bendemeer himself, cool and lathy in spotless ducks, planted there, as was his morning custom, to oversee and command all his little capital. And in truth it was a kingdom's capital, the center of a trading monopoly of the old type and chief seat of as strange and absolute a tyrant as the world still offers room for; rich, powerful, independent, fearing nothing between heaven and hell and at once the best-loved and the best-hated individual in his sphere of influence.

Bendemeer, trader, philanthropist, and purveyor of rotgut, was one of those unclassed growths of the South Seas that almost constitute a new racial type. Nobody could have placed his nationality or his caste or his accent. His name was of a piece with the grim self-sufficiency that gave nothing and asked nothing: an obvious jest, borrowed from the Persian song of an Irish poet, but the one touch of fancy about him. Somewhere, somehow, he had taken a cynic twist or a rankling wound that had turned his white man's blood once for all. They tell stories of such cases up and down the islands, and mostly the stories are very ugly and discreditable indeed. But not so concerning Bendemeer, against whom was no scandal, only curses and bitterness. For his peculiarity took the especially irritating form of fair dealings with some thousands of brown-skinned natives and no dealings at all with any man of his own color—except to beat him at strict business and then to sell him as much villainous

liquor as he could at the highest possible price. As he leaned there indolently in his doorway with arms folded and cheroot between his thin lips he could measure his own land as far as he could see on either side, a small part of his holdings in plantations and trading stations throughout the archipelago. Offshore, behind the only good strip of barrier reef and near the only navigable channel on the south coast, lay anchored his *Likely Jane,* flagship of a smart little navy. His gang of boys was hustling cargo out of her in surfboats, and both boys and boats were the handiest and ablest that could be found anywhere for that ticklish work. He had only to turn his head to view the satisfactory bulk of his sheds and dependencies, solid, new-painted. The house at his back was trim, broad, and comfortable, and in the storeroom underneath lay thousands of dollars' worth of assorted trade goods, all of which would eventually become copra and great wealth.

This was the man, decidedly in possession of his own legs and able to stand and to navigate on the same, to whom Junius Peabody appealed in his wretched need. . . .

Junius stumbled up to the steps. The burst had marrow-drawn him, his lungs labored pitifully as if he were breathing cotton wool. It was hot, for the sun had sprung wide like an opened furnace gate, but he had not started a pore.

"I've been robbed," he wheezed, and pointed a wavering hand. "Those chaps there—robbed—!"

Bendemeer glanced aside up the strand after the disappearing ruffians and then down at the complainant, but otherwise he did not move, only stayed considering from his lean, leathery mask, with still eyes, outwardlooking.

"What do you care?" he said idly. "You'll be dead in a month anyhow."

Junius gaped toward him dizzily. The fellow was the local authority and besides had taken his money. He could not believe that he had heard aright. "But, say—they've stolen my property!"

Bendemeer shot a blue ring of smoke into the sunshine. "In that case you've lost it. They're heading for the Rocks, and once they've gone to earth there you never could find them—you'd be torn to pieces if you did."

He flicked the ash of his cheroot in a pause. "I suppose you mean I might help you," he continued. "I might, but I won't. I've seen a good many of your kind before, drift stuff that gets washed up on the beach. You're not worth it. And now, since you have no further business with me, I'd be obliged if you'd kindly get the hell out of my front yard. You're interfering with the view. . . ."

Junius Peabody found himself groping away through the sunlight on Fufuti beach once more. A dead calm held the air. Under the steady, low organ note of the reef he could hear only the drag of his own steps, the curious, unforgetable "shr-ring" of boot leather on coral.

It was borne upon him then that he had just acquired a liberal education, that he had learned more essential facts within the last hour than he had ever gained before in his twenty-odd years—a tabloid of life—and too late to be of any use. Such abstractions are sometimes valuable to a man, but they are not the sort that brings a lump in his throat and a winking in his eyes. The thing, the sheerly heartfelt thing that Junius Peabody said to himself, sniffling, was this: "And he didn't—didn't even offer me a drink!"

There was nothing to draw him any farther—no help, no promise of success, not even a single witness to shame with a

grin or to urge with an expectant stare—nothing outside himself. Fufuti beach lay stark and aching white before him. The two thieves had long since lost themselves among the palms. Down by the water's edge a couple of Bendemeer's boat boys were salvaging odds and ends lost overboard in an upset in yesterday's heavy surf. They did not waste a thought or a look on him. He was many degrees less important than a lot of other rubbish around there. He might just as well, he might much better, slump down in a sodden heap amid the rest of the jetsam. And yet he did not. . . . And he did go on. For some obscure, irrational human reason, he did go on. Perhaps because of the tiny coal in his breast, blown red by Bendemeer's blasting contempt. Perhaps because, after all, no man ever quite achieves complete resemblance to a jellyfish.

On the southern tip of Fufuti stands Tenbow Head, the end of a rough little jut of land known locally as the Rocks. To speak by the book, there is neither rock nor head, but the abyss turned in its sleep once, and shouldered half a mile of Fufuti's shore line to a height of thirty feet—enough for a mountain in this sea of humble atolls. Incidentally it smashed the elevated reefs like chalk in a mortar. Tenbow is a wreck of shattered coral terraces, clad in the eager growths which profit by its trifling rise and which alone do profit. For the rest it remains the island jungle, a section apart and untouched, almost impenetrable.

Junius Peabody began his exploration of this cheerful region by falling on his face in a gully and bruising his nose very grievously. He found no trail to guide him up the slope. It was pitted like slag, deceitful as old honeycomb.

The footing crumbled; tempting beds of moss and fern slipped away at his clutch; twisting lianas caught his ankles and sent him asprawl. The very ground seemed armed against him with a malignant life of its own. He had to creep among jagged teeth that sliced his flimsy garments and his putty-soft flesh. And when a loosened mass slid gently over at a touch and caught and crushed an arm he scarcely wondered whether any personal power had directed it. It was all the same.

For a long time he lay looking at his pulped fingers and the driven drops of blood from the quick of his nails, sensing the exquisite pain almost as a luxury, hugging it to him. But at length he stirred and began to wriggle forward again.

"If I'm going to die anyway," said Junius Peabody, "I'm going to die doing this." Which was an extraordinary remark on all accounts. . . .

And so by dint of following something and still following with unlimited purpose over a limited terrain, he ran it down in the end and came to the hiding place he sought.

A rooted instinct of the potentially criminal, which prompts them to be ready to flee though no man pursueth, had moved the beachcombers of Fufuti long since to prepare their snug retreat in the heart of the Rocks. On the inward shore of the promontory they had found a level bit of shelf screened by lush vegetation, with the green-stained cliff for a wall and the sapphire waters of the lagoon below for forecourt. Hither they repaired in the intervals of lesser lawbreaking and free entertainment, always secure of hearth and shelter where the broad pandanus spread its shingles. And

hither, straight as merry men to their shaw, they had brought the great treasure of the morning.

A truly homelike scene was that on which Junius Peabody peered from ambush above. . . .

From the convenient branch of a tree the Sydney Duck had suspended by its middle a single stout stick. At one end of the stick he had slung the stolen lump in a fiber net. At the other he had attached a battered tin can of the kind that the beneficent enterprise of an American oil company had spread to most of the dark parts of the earth. On this balance of an ancient and primitive design he was engaged in weighing his ill-gotten gains, squatting to the task.

"A gallon of water weighs a good eight pound," he declared. "I figger five quarts an' a 'arf. And five is ten and the 'arf is one—"

Willems stood beside him in an attitude of stolid skepticism. There was no mistaking the breed of this big derelict. He had managed to assert it on a Pacific isle by fashioning himself somehow a pipe with a clay bowl and a long stem of the true drooping line. He looked quite domestic and almost paternal as he shuffled his broad feet and towered over the little larrikin. But the fists he carried in the pockets of his dungarees bulged like coconuts, and his hairy arms were looped brown cables. A tough man for an argument was Mynheer Willems.

"Yaw," he was saying. "But how you know you got five quarts and a half?"

"W'y, any fool could guess near enough!" cried Sydney, with the superfluous violence that was his caste mark. "And you—y' big Dutchman—'in't you swilled enough beer in your time to judge? Besides, the bally can 'olds three gallon—

bound to. There's one sure measure. . . . I say we got, anyw'y, eleven pounds of this stuff, and I 'appen to know that Bendemeer's fair crazy after it. He'll pay big. We ought to 'ave two thousand dollars Chile to split. . . . Two thousand silver dibs!"

It was a cue to friendly feeling, that luscious phrase. The two men beamed upon it as Sydney dumped the balance and swung the fiber net. But it was also a cue of another kind, for it brought Junius Peabody on stage. He arrived by the simple process of sliding in a bundle over the brow of the cliff.

"That's mine," he announced.

The beachcombers stayed stricken, which was pardonable. Surely there never showed a less heroic figure or a stranger defiance than that of Mr. Peabody, torn, bedraggled, and besmeared. There was nothing muscular or threatening about him. He took no pose. He offered no weapon. He came on at them limping, with quivering lip and empty hands, even with open hands. And yet the incredible fact remained that he did come on at them and continued to come.

"It's mine," repeated Junius. "All mine, and I'm going to have it—all!"

Amazement held them motionless for as long as it took him to cross the ledge—pleased amazement, as they knew him better. There are few things more congenial to certain gentlemen than a chance to maul an easy victim. And here was the easiest victim that either of these gentlemen had seen in many a day. He was no match for them, could be no possible match. Since he would have it so, they accepted joyously, closed in upon him from either side and started to drag

him down as a preliminary to trampling the lights out of him. . . .

But they counted without the absolute simplicity of a man who has found an objective for the first time in his life and has set himself to reach it, regardless. Mr. Peabody did not pause to fight or to wrestle. He let them get a good grip on him and then took the unexpected way by keeping right on—and, pinioning their arms, merely walking them over the edge into space.

For an instant the three seemed to hang suspended, interlocked amid smashing vines and taut creepers, and then toppled toward the lagoon.

Even before they struck, Sydney's despairing yell rang out. Their plunge drowned it and gave way to the cries of startled sea birds, knifing the air in flung white crescents and circling about the troubled spot that boiled like blue champagne. But when he came up again the unfortunate larrikin loosed shriek after bubbling shriek and floundered madly for shore, all else forgotten in his dominant terror.

Willems was made of sterner metal. He grappled Peabody as they rose and sought to use his long arms, reaching for the throat. He learned better presently, however, and he learned, too, how much chance he had against a man who had once won a fancy diving title at Travers Island. Junius took him down by the feet and held him down until there was no spring and no temper left to him, only a large and limp and very badly frightened Hollander who wanted to get out of the wet. He was quite willing to paddle after the Sydney Duck. Meanwhile Junius gathered up an object in a

fiber net that was floating near by and swam on to follow his purpose. . . .

The man Bendemeer was standing behind his little zinc bar when a shadow sifted in through the doorway, and, looking up, he took a backward step that nearly cost him his stock of glassware. The man Bendemeer was not used to stepping back from anything, but the red and dripping ruin that confronted him was beyond usage of any kind. Junius Peabody looked as if he had been run through a mangle. His dress was fragmentary. Most of the skin had been flayed from the more prominent curves of his anatomy. His left arm hung useless. He crawled in and propped himself to keep from falling, and called for brandy in a voice scarcely recognizable. "Peabody—is it?" demanded Bendemeer, incredulous.

"Will you keep a customer waiting?" rasped Junius. "You needn't stare." He laughed weakly. "You can't order me off now, Bendemeer. I'm a paying customer again."

"As how?"

Junius lifted a fist and dropped the sopping net on the bar. "Ambergris—eleven pounds of it. My property."

Bendemeer inspected the brownish lump, and as he understood, his thin lips pleated and his glance quickened. "Oh, ho!" he said. "Was it *this* they robbed you of?"

Peabody nodded.

"You got it back from them—yourself?"

"There's the stuff."

"So I see. But I'm asking—did you take it away from those two cutthroats alone, without any help?"

"I did. And now I've come to talk business. It's a good proposition, Bendemeer."

The tall, grim white man studied him with a narrow regard glinting like a probe and equally cool, detached, and impersonal. He had the air of a surgeon who approaches a clinical experiment. "I'm inclined to think it may be," he decided. "Yes—a sporting risk; though I'm certain enough of the result, Peabody, mind that. I believe I might make a bit of a gamble with myself, just to see that I'm right. Come now—what do you want?"

"A thousand silver," said Junius.

"I haven't so much about me. Suppose we say a standing credit for a thousand drinks instead."

Junius stiffened against the bar.

"It amounts to the same thing, doesn't it?" continued Bendemeer: "Why should you trouble about dollars—mere tokens? You can't get away from Fufuti. The *Jane* out there, she's due to sail this morning on a round of my plantations. She's the only ship clearing for a month at least. . . . By the time you'd drunk yourself to death I'd simply have the money back again."

Peabody stared, and a streak of crimson leaped into his cheek as if a whiplash had been laid across it.

"Damn you—!" he cried shakily. "Give me that brandy—I'll pay for it. Here's the stuff. It's mine. I went after it and I got it. I earned it myself, and fairly!"

"To what end?" Bendemeer cut in. "So you can pickle yourself before burial?"

Junius Peabody writhed. "What's it to you how I spend it afterward? I'm a free agent. I can do as I like."

"That," said Bendemeer with quiet emphasis, "is a lie."

Holding his quivering subject, impaled on his glance as it

seemed, he reached a black, square bottle. He shoved a glass in front of Junius Peabody and poured a generous measure. With one hand he kept the glass covered and with the other pointed out through the doorway.

"I'll say you lie, and I'll demonstrate:

"You see my schooner out there? That's her boat on the beach. She leaves in half an hour; her captain's come now for final orders. She goes first from here to an island of mine a hundred miles away. I planted it with coconuts five years ago, and left a population of maybe a dozen Kanakas to tend them—it's going to be worth money some day. Nukava, they call it, and it's the edge of the earth, the farthest corner, and the loneliest and the driest. There's not a drop of anything on the place except water, scant and brackish at that. But a white man could live there, if he were fit to live at all, and wanted to badly enough.

"Now I'll make you an offer. I'll buy this lump of stuff from you, and I'll buy it either of two ways. A half interest in Nukava and you go there at once to take charge as agent. . . . Or else—here's your brandy and I'll keep you perpetually drunk as long as you last."

Junius swayed on his feet. "Agent?" he stammered. "To go away—?"

"Now. And once there you can't escape. You're stuck for a year on a coral gridiron, Peabody, to sit and fry."

"What for? You—! What for?"

Bendemeer shrugged.

"Because it amuses me. Because I please. Because—I know what you'll do. I've been watching men of your sort all my life, and I know what they're worth—drift on the beaches, scraps, trash, jetsam. Regeneration, eh? Rot and

drivel! You can't save yourself any more than you could lift yourself by your own boot straps. It suits me to prove it to you this way."

He lifted his hand away from the glass. Peabody's stare dropped from that cryptic regard to the waiting brandy before him, the red liquor, odorous and maddening. Peabody's lips moved, and he wet them with the tip of his tongue and gripped the bar with straining white fingers.

"You're wrong," he breathed. "You lose, Bendemeer. I can do it—I've just learned I can do it. And, by God," he added, prayerfully, "I will."

Bendemeer took up the netted lump.

"Very well," he said, offhand. "Just a moment, while I chuck this stuff in the storeroom."

He turned and tramped out through the rear without a glance behind him—and left Junius Peabody there alone before the bar.

He was gone perhaps five minutes, quite as much as that, an ample space of time. When he came back there was no glass in sight. It had vanished, and the room reeked with the fumes of a very flagrant distillation of French brandy. He looked his customer up and down and his lids lowered a trifle.

"Well, how did you like the flavor?"

The face of Junius Peabody was like a death's-head, but the eyes in his sockets blazed with a light all their own, and, standing there erect, standing square on his two legs with his feet braced apart, he swore—somewhat inexpertly, it was true, but still quite heartily; good, crisp profanity such as one able man may use with another—until Bendemeer's puzzled gaze caught the sparkle of broken glass lying in a

great splash of liquid in a corner of the floor. "I'm going to Nukava!" cried Junius Peabody. "And you see—you see there are some scraps thrown up on the beach that are worth something after all, and be damned to you, Bendemeer!"

Bendemeer's grip shot out as if against his volition and after an instant's hesitation Peabody took it. He did not yet know all the trader had done for him, perhaps would never know, but on the inscrutable front of that remarkable man was a faint glow curiously unlike a loser's chagrin.

"So it seems," acknowledged Bendemeer. "So it seems"—and smiled a little, rather oddly. . . .

Bendemeer was still smiling that way, all by himself, an hour or so later when he had watched the *Likely Jane* lay her course for Nukava with the new agent on board and had gone down into his storeroom to put the place to rights. There was a clutter of odds and ends of cargo that had been spilled from an upset surfboat the day before. Most of it had been salvaged by his Kanaka boys along shore, but a certain broken tub containing tallow had lost part of its contents. However, he was able now to restore a large lump of it weighing perhaps eleven pounds or so, which made the tally nearly good.

A MAN'S A FOOL [1]

by WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

SURE, I know I could do better by myself, only I think I'll stay here to work on the railroad track near this town. You see the steeple through the trees there by the watertank. And then when the whistle blows I can walk in to the town and maybe I will see that woman on the street again.

What? Well, that Lisbon woman I am going to tell you about. And maybe I'll laugh. When I come here to find her I was savage enough, but then when I see her on the street I couldn't do it. Because I see I would be doing her a favor to hurt her, the way she is now, and all I could do was laugh —like I done that time when I set beside my brother Raphael.

What? No, thank you, sir. I know I could do better by myself. Yes, sure, I know more than these other fellows in the gang, because they are mostly people from Bulgar and Turkey and such places, and I am a Portugee fellow. No, but not a Lisbon; them Lisbons is as bad as Bulgars, almost. No, I am an Island fellow, from the Azores, sir. My father he had a good stone house in Flores and three shares in a vessel to the Banks, and I and my brother went to priest-school. And another thing, I am an American citizen a good many years; I have voted for President and I am good to read and

1 From *Land's End,* copyright, 1918, by Harper & Bros. By permission of the publishers.

write English. I wouldn't wonder if I would be a pretty rich fellow, I and my brother, that is, because when we was here only a couple of years together we had the largest flounder-dredger fishing out of Provincetown, and sometimes we would gain sixty to seventy dollars a week, the two of us. Only now I don't care because I know a man's a fool, sir. And when I see that Lisbon woman dragging on the street some night again I think I'll just laugh, like I done that time setting beside my brother.

You never see my brother Raphael. You don't know. You look at me and you see I'm heavy-built and kind of ugly in the face. But Raphael he took after my mother, so you wouldn't say to look at us we was any relations. When I was in America a year, down there in Provincetown, and I sent for my brother to come, too, and when he got there and I was on the dock and give him a kiss on the cheeks, people laughed and says, "We never knew you had gone to work and sent for a woman already, John Prada."

But, no, sir, he wasn't a woman by any means. It was only the soft skin and the big eyes and the long curly hair, and when I got him a haircut you wouldn't say he was a woman; I should say not. They think he was scared, but he was only homesick. He wasn't like some of them fellows who wouldn't care if they was home or in China; he had some feelings. And the worst thing, we had to go live in that Lisbon boarding-house, because the St. Michel's and Diolda Vier's and the other Island houses was full up, and my brother was kind of a clean fellow, and if you know what that Lisbon boarding-house was like, sir! It's all right in a vessel on a trip, where you look for it. But when you get ashore after a trip you want something different.

I remember one night Raphael couldn't sleep. I feel him getting out of bed and then I see him standing at the window, and after a while I get up and come over to see what he was looking at. It was the full of the moon, sir, and I had to say it wasn't like the Islands, where everything's green, with nice stone walls and colored houses. There wasn't much to see here excepting the side of a sand-dune coming down on top of the house, with a bedtick laying on it like a dead animal and the top of a dead tree sticking out. And beyond the hill you could see Matheson's freezer over on the shore like a big box made of concrete, with a high concrete chimney and smoke coming out of it straight into the air, black as ink in that white moonlight.

I didn't say nothing till he did.

"But we can gain a lot of money here, can't we, John?" says he.

"Sure we can," says I. "I and you will be pretty rich men."

"We wouldn't need to gain so very much," says he, "so we could go back to the Islands and live there as good as our father, if not better. You know Domingo Tarvis will die pretty quick, and you know what a nice scene it is from his house with the flowers and market there and then the water?"

I see he was crying, and I put one arm around his neck.

"I tell you what," says I. "It's too hot for you in this room and it stinks too bad." It was quite a small room and there was eight fellows sleeping there in their sock, same as on a vessel, and an air-tight stove. "I tell you," says I, "I'll open this window a crack and we'll get a blanket and cover up and you'll feel more like."

That's what we done, and I think it would have gone fine, only a fellow by name of Ventura woke up and feel the draught.

"Who the hell?" says he, and he got up and shut the window down.

That made me mad. I was going to show him a thing, only Raphael feel me and I hear him begging into my ear:

"For Mother of God, John, don't wake them up. I don't care, if only you don't wake them up."

And so I lay and took it and left the dirty Lisbons snore.

That was the largest mistake, sir, to have to go live at that Lisbon boarding-house at all. And another was when we never shift somewheres else when we could have had the chance, because we was so busy all the time and we done so good and got a fellow in one of the freezers to put us up a power-boat of our own to go floundering in, and now, as I and my brother both says, we would gain enough to make us rich in the Islands in no time at all.

Some of them Lisbons done good, too, and some of them begin to think about women. There was three of them in that room where we bunked, Ventura and a fellow we call Scoury Jack and an old man by name of Sousa who had buried three in the old country. They all sail in the same crew, and when they was home from a trip you could hear them laying awake in the dark talking about it and wishing and figuring up what it would cost to send across for some women, enough to drive a man out of his head to lay quiet and hear them. And one night when they had talked it all over again they decided on it to send across for three women, and I couldn't sleep the rest of that night.

I tell you, I hate to tell my brother. He must have took note of me that morning, because he says:

"Look here, John, what's wrong?"

I tell him nothing was wrong at all. But just the same it keep at me and I couldn't get away from it. It was just a little after sunrise and we was jogging along, with our dredge on the bottom, about two mile to the south'rd of the Race, me standing the wheel and my brother cleaning the fish we'd fetched up in our first dredge.

"Raphael," says I, as if I was just thinking of it, "a fellow's only going to be young once in his lifetime. Ain't that so?"

"That's right," says he, kind of laughing.

"Raphael," says I, "did you hear them fellows talking last night, Scoury Jack and Ventura and the old man? The three of them is going to send over for three women—"

He started to laugh again, and then he leave off. I had to turn my head and give him a look. It was one of them red mornings like you'll see when the weather's coming on to be bad. And there I see him standing on the deck in that red light, going up and down against the sky, and his oilers and his arms to the elbows running blood, and a bloody knife in one hand and a big bloody haddock in the other, and a look on his face like a kid that never know why he'd been kicked.

That kind of fetched me up. The engine was skipping, and I was glad of it and stick my head down the hatch. And now I tell you a funny thing. I decide on it the only thing was to just laugh it off. But when I get my head out it seem like there was some kind of a devil inside of me, and in place of laughing it off I says:

"Look here, maybe it would cost a little money, but what's the odds to you if it come out of my shares? Eh?"

But he wouldn't say a word. . . . I hove to and we hoisted the dredge aboard, a good eleven barrel of flounders this time, and that was enough. We put for Wood End, cleaning and icing down as we come along on top of the tide. And all the time I keep looking at him out of the edge of an eye and wishing he's say something or do something and not keep looking at the sky-line astern of us like a fellow in a dream. That's the first time in my life I couldn't get at my brother. Seem like some kind of a glass wall had come between us, so I couldn't come at him no matter how I went about it. By and by I couldn't stand it no longer to see my brother like that, and I come over and give him a good lick on the back, and I says:

"God alive, Raphael, what you think? Don't you know I was only joking?" says I.

And when I see the light come back on his face it was like something had fall off my back all of a sudden, and there I was on tiptoe and there was the surf pounding up white on the Point and the gulls hollering all around the sky and my brother Raphael wiping the back of a wrist across his eyes.

"I should think so," says he. "There's plenty better women in the Islands. Ain't there, John?"

"And time enough to think of them," says I, "when we get there."

"When you imagine them dirty Lisbons," says he.

And so we come breezing up to the freezer dock, feeling good.

And that's all right, sir; it's fine to feel that way. But it's another thing with night coming on again and the idea

edging back and edging back into your head what you've gone and passed up. And that night when the three got to talking about it in the dark again—how the old man was going to have a fat one and the other two want a trigger kind of woman so as to look good on the street—when I hear them carrying on that way I couldn't no more lay quiet than I could fly. When I see my brother was asleep I come over and set on the bottom of Scoury Jack's tick, and by and by I says for them to put me down for one too.

"Well, sir—I don't know. . . . I hired me a house up to the west'rd, all Portugee people in that street and quite handy to our mooring, and in our spare time I and my brother rigged it all up and varnished it up and everything right. I never asked him to, you understand. And he never says anything; just turn up with a brush or a hammer and went at it with his eyes on his boots, and never a smile or a joke out of him. As I remember, the first word I had out of him all the time was the day I says to him, kind of offhand:

"Well, look here now, and which will be your room, Raphael, old boy?"

"*My* room?" says he, letting everything go and raising up. But then he wouldn't look at me and I see his face as red as a girl.

'Look here," says I, laying hold of his arm. "Course you know—"

But he got away from me and run out of the room, and by and by when I come after him I find him with his head up against the door in the woodhouse, *crying*. I never could make him out, that way. Only of course you got to remember he wasn't hardly more than a kid.

Well, that's the first word I had out of him, and the last, too, and that was the last time he give me a hand with the house, and a week wasn't out before the fellows I know begin asking me, "What's the matter between you and Raphael, John?" And I couldn't tell them. . . .

Well, all right. When the four of them come finally, with their tickets pinned on their dresses, we got married to the women in the church there, I and Ventura and Scoury Jack and the old man. Afterward we had cake and wine at the priest's house, and then we take them off home, every man his own ways, and Ventura and Scoury Jack looking pretty sour, too, because I come into it last after it was all fixed up, so to speak, and me an Islander to boot, and then this one I draw, this Mary Cabral, turn out with the best-looking face and figure in the lot. She was handsome, sir.

Well, a man is a fool, that's all I can say. For a month after that, I guess, I wasn't anything like myself. You never see a woman like that, sir. You'll say I might have know, to fetch over a piece like that, sight-unseen and no turning back, out of a town like Lisbon. But it's just that a man is a fool. Do you know what? After the first couple of days that house of mine was like a pig-pen, and when I finally put it up to her, kind of offhand, why didn't she cook up something or other good, she says why didn't I get some girl in to do the cooking?

Imagine that, sir. And then when she see my face she shift her course, come and put her arms around my neck and her face close to mine, and make her lips up like a red flower, and half close her eyes, and says to me, says she:

"*Me? Cook?* You look at me, you big handsome fellow, you, and you talk to me about—*cooking!*"

Sometimes she get me so I didn't care for a couple of days at a time if the house and the boat and my brother and the whole world even should go to hell. And that's the way I was.

Only sometimes I come to myself and feel ashamed; sometimes I look at her, going around the house in her dirty shift and her hair stringing down her back, and I feel disgusted with everything. It wasn't only she was too lazy to do the house; she was even too lazy to dress herself. And that even wouldn't be so bad if she would have kept in the house, out of people's sight. But no. I tell you I've seen her out leaning over the fence with not half her clothes on, passing talk with Frank Lopez on his way up to his store in the back street, and his own woman watching it all from her gate down the line. Or I've see her hollering across the back way to some Lisbon woman she used to know over there, and they'd ask her what she think this was—Silvado's place in Lisbon? And then she give it to them.

"You—!" she yell, and the names she give them! "You shut up, because I know a few things about you!"

"You shut up yourself!" they give her back. "If we was to go to work and tell your old man half the things we know about you, Wild Mary! If we was to tell him!"

Imagine that, sir. Imagine I had to stand inside and listen to her making a disgrace of herself and me, and afraid to go out and get her for fear the children would yell at me to take my woman in and dress her—little kids six and eight year old—and me leaning my head on the door there and saying to myself: *"I'm going down to hell! I'm going down to hell!"*

One day I see things queer. One day she come bouncing in

with her hair on end and her eyes sticking out with one of them tongue-fights, and I just stand there and look at her.

"O my God!" says she, hauling back from me. I just look at her.

"*Don't!*" she yell, and she put her hands up.

I never touch her—just a little push—and she went down backward over a chair and fetched up against the stove. It never burnt her a mite, not a mite, sir, but she set up a scream like she was slaughtered. I turn and walk straight out of the house and down the street, and I come to the shore-front.

"Where's my brother?" I asked some Lisbons tarring twine there.

"Where do you suppose?" says one of them. "Dredging."

"Who's he got to go?" says I.

"That St. Michel's, Tony Miers. Why?"

They all look at the sky and I see they was grinning. I see I ought to show them a thing, only there was no heart inside of me, and I come down and set on the beach and wait.

I set a long while. The sun was going down and the full moon just heaving clear; I see it running toward me across the puddles on the flats. I see the *Flores* coming up along, kicking up a little feather, and my brother Raphael in the bow to pick up the mooring. I see him and the St. Michel's coming off in the dory. I see them aground at the low-water, and then I see my brother coming toward me across the flats. Everything was turned the color of lilacs. I tell you, sir, my brother looked to me more like some kind of an angel than anything else, coming toward me in that queer, shiny wind.

Then he see me for the first time and he stopped. I couldn't stand it. I get up and I turn away, and I come back up along my street and I set down on my step and I wish I was dead.

I put my head in my hands and shut my eyes, and I still see my brother coming toward me in that lilac-covered wind with the water behind; and I think of the shore below our father's house in Flores, and all the Island girls I and him know. And I hear the freezer whistle blowing; I hear it tearing around through the roofs and streets, and there's no whistle like that in Flores. I hear people's feet passing by the gate. Some of them give me a word, but I never answer. It was coming on dark. All of a sudden I jerk up my head and look, and there was my brother standing inside the gate.

"Hello, John!" says he.

"Hello, Raphael!" says I.

I see him shaking all over like a dead leaf, and I says: "Don't Raphael! For God's sake don't!"

And there we was on the walk, me with my arm around his neck and him carrying on like it was him had done something in place of me. And all I could think to say was, "Don't, Raphael, for God's sake!"

The moon come over a roof and where we stand it was pale as a dead man's body. I look in my brother's face. He seem a mite poorer in the cheeks and his mustache was beginning to show, but he still had them eyes like a little boy, bashful and full of tears.

"God damn me!" says I.

"No, no!" says he.

"Yes, yes!" says I.

He never answer that time. I see him drop his eyes and

get red, and when I turn my head I see my woman standing in the doorway.

"Hello!" says she, as sweet as if nothing had happened. "Who's that, John?"

"That?" says I. I don't know why it was, but I seem to go cold all over. "That? Why—why—that's a—fellow," says I.

Then it seem like I'd hit my brother, and I see by his face he didn't understand, and, after all, how could you expect him to?

"That?" says I, again. "Why, that's my—my brother."

"Oh!" says she, hardly over her breath. She give a kind of pat to her hair and I see her coming down the step. She come and stood beside me and she look in my brother's face.

"Oh!" says she, again, the same way, hardly over her breath. "Oh, but he's a handsome boy! He's a handsome boy." She put out a hand and laid it on his arm, and he look at me and then at the ground under him, not knowing whether to go red or white.

"Your brother?" says she. "That makes him my brother, too, and I think I should give him a kiss then."

And she lift up his face with her hand and give him a kiss on the mouth and a look out of them eyes. And what could anybody say?

Then she turn and put her arm around my neck and pet me and says we would have him in for a bite of supper, of course.

"No," says my brother, looking every which way. "No, thanks. I got to go down-street—"

"John," says she, "don't you listen to him. Come on fetch him in." And there she was already ahold of his other arm.

And what could I do? It was my house and he was my brother.

I tell you the truth, when we come in there I was ashamed to have my brother see what my house looked like, and I was ashamed to see what kind of a supper she got up for us. But do you imagine she was ashamed? Not a bit of it, not a bit of it. You'd think she run a palace.

And the way she carry on; the way she make of me! Nothing would do whenever she come anywhere near me, but I was to have a pet or a kiss. She got up even when we was at table and come around and set down in my lap and laid her head on my shoulder, and I feel her cheek on mine. She could make me foolish over her, I got to say it.

But it made me ashamed, all the same, to have her carry on that way before my brother. He wasn't hardly more than a boy, remember. His face was like a fire and he couldn't tell what to do with his eyes, like he was saying to himself, "What they got me into here, anyhow?" He look at his plate and at the lamp and then he look at her on my shoulder, and he keep looking at her like he couldn't get his eyes off.

I turn my head sideways to see. Well, sir, was she looking at me? Was she thinking a thing about me? No, sir, she was looking straight into my brother Raphael's eyes, with her cheeks red and her mouth parted a little—and it all come over me.

"Get up!" I says to her, and I didn't say it too loud.

I get up too. I see my brother get up on the other side of the table with one hand to his head. My woman give me one look and then she began to back off, but I took a good hold on her wrist.

"Mother of God!" says she. *"Don't!"* She put up her arm to guard, and I hear her screech like that *"Don't! don't! My God!"*

"Your *what?*" says I. And then I let her have it between the eyes.

I see her going backward and I see her fetch up in my brother's arms all of a heap. I see him standing there looking every which way, red as a beet and not knowing what to do with her, and her hair all sprawled over his neck and her fingers clawing at his two cheeks. And I hear her weeping and wailing to him, "Don't let him—don't let him hurt me no more, Raphael. Don't let him hurt me no more—"

I give a kind of laugh and walk out of the house and leave them there. At the gate I see Frank Lopez hanging around on his way down from his store, and I ask him what he want.

"Nothing," says he, and he lick his lip kind of nervous.

"Good night," says I.

He come as far as the corner of the next yard, and then he start to hang around again till he see me watching him, when he made off home. After a minute my brother come out of the house. We stand there a spell with our hands in our pockets, looking at the moon and the yellow windows stringing down the street, not saying anything. What was there to say? It wasn't his fault, none of what had happened.

When he went I walk as far as the back street with him, and there I says good night. He says good night too, but yet he wouldn't look at me, not till he got to the top of the back-street hill. And there I see him turn

and give me a look, his face the color of the moon.

I sleep on the sofa in the front room that night. At three in the morning I was on the beach to meet Raphael and we let the St. Michel's go, and I come back to my fishing again.

We never says much to each other them days, I and my brother. It was something, and yet you couldn't lay hand on it. For one thing, we never talk about the Islands same as we used to, and we was always so busy with the dredge or the engine we never have time to give each other a good square look. It used to be, whenever anything come across my brother's mind, he couldn't no more keep it from me than he could fly. But now it come over me one morning, when I see him standing the wheel with his eyes fixed away from me and looking at nothing at all over on the sky-line —it come over me all of a sudden that my brother Raphael had grow up.

It give me an awful feeling, sir. It fetched me up all-standing. I couldn't help myself, but I come and throw one arm around my brother's neck like I used to—and then I never know what to say.

That afternoon when we come in, who should I see but my woman down to the beach to meet me. I could have beat her, to do a foolish thing like that with all them fellows mending gear on wharf, and her with that blue spot not wore off yet between her eyes where I give it to her. It made me ashamed.

We haul up the dory, and I says good-by to my brother, and I walk up to my woman and I says, "Look here, what's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" says she. "It was just I couldn't

hardly wait for you, John," says she. And then I see her looking over my shoulder and she says: "Why, there's your brother! Only you'd think he was no relations to us at all, the way he never comes and drops in on us. Look here, John, why don't you fetch him along now to have a bite of supper with us to-night? . . . What do you say, stranger?" says she over my shoulder, laughing and snapping her eyes.

I would have stop her if I could. I turn and see my brother right behind me, and I see him scowl at me and go purple in the face.

"No, no," says he, shuffling his feet. "No, no, I—I—"

"No," says I to her. "My brother's got to go down-street to another place for supper."

He give me another scowl and turn off, and I see him walking into a cloud of smudge stinking up just there where a gang of Lisbons was boiling a tar-pot, and I think I hear one of them Lisbons laugh.

"Come along," says I to my woman. I never give her a look till we come up to our gate, and then I see her face like a devil, sickly white with red spots on the cheeks, and her teeth biting into her lip till it was blue.

"Look here," says I. And then I says: "No, you wait till you get into the house, and don't make a fool of yourself before people."

"I will if I want!" says she, and her eyes was like coals in a fire. And then she begin. Why didn't I tend my own business? Why did I always go to work and stick my oar in?

"He was coming!" says she, and she was wild. "Anybody could see he was coming. Anybody with anything in their

heads could see he was just waiting to be argued a little. Anybody could see he was coming!"

She was no madder than I was, though. I tell you I had hard work to keep my hand off her.

"You poor foolish!" says I. "Don't you know nothing at all? You want to know where my brother's going to supper? Eh? Well, he's going to supper with a girl named Philomena Veara's folks. Don't you suppose a fellow like my brother would ever get married? Eh?"

She stick her face up to mine and I hear the wind sucking in her throat. "You liar!" says she. "You liar! you liar!" She make her fingers up like claws. "Tell me you're a liar!" says she. "Go on!"

I never twitch an eyelid.

We didn't say nothing at supper, and right afterward I went down to Tony Jason's cobble-shop, where I and some of the Island fellows generally set a spell in the evening. I imagine it must have been close onto eight o'clock when I come back home, and I was surprised to see the house dark. There was a light in a window across the street, though, and it fall across my gate, and there I see Frank Lopez waiting for me. He was an Island fellow same as me, but he was one of them kind has done pretty good ashore and likes to dress up, always had on a white collar and some-colored tie and a hard hat, a kind of large fellow, but going soft.

He never give me no time, but he start right in.

"Why don't you keep your woman to home?" says he.

He look sick. I see his mouth twisting under his mustache. I ought to show him a thing, but I think best to hold by the wind.

"Whose business is that?" says I, and not too loud.

But there was no talking with him. He wouldn't listen.

"Why don't you keep your woman to home?" he says, again, like a wild one. "A man ought to be ashamed to leave his woman go run around after a young fellow like your brother Raphael—run around bareheaded after dark—without no shame for who should know it—even them Lisbons to his boarding-house."

"Whose business is that?" says I, again. I just keep looking at him. "You go on home to your woman," says I.

He was a soft fellow and he go.

How did I feel? Well, I feel like my hands was cold, and I rub them together to get warm. Then I come up to the back street and I turn to the east'rd going over the hill. I just walk along. And when I get up a ways I see my woman coming over the top of the hill, and I fetch up and wait for her. When she come closer, I give you my word, sir, I think for a minute she'd been having a drink. She never had sense enough even to be scared of me, but she come right along like a girl dancing in *Menin' Jesus*, her face shining in the stars.

"I know you was lying," she says, and it was same as if she was singing a song. "I knew it, I knew it"—like that.

Somehow or other I couldn't lay hand on her, that way. I turn my back and look over the edge of the hill, and I see the harbor black as a pond of ink with all the vessels' riding-lights sprinkled over it, and all the roofs of the town under my feet. It was still as the dead; it was so still I hear somebody walking along the front street down there, and it was like it was something walking *clump-clump-clump*

around the insides of my head. And by and by I says to my woman:

"Come on along home."

And we come home. . . .

One morning my brother was sick. We had decided on it to go off early that morning so as to make the south'rd of the Rips. I was down to the beach about half past one, setting on the gunwale of the dory and waiting for my brother to show up. The moon was just turned a couple of nights, right in top of the sky, and it make the beach and the fish-houses and the chimney of the freezer beyond look like a picture of night in a film to the theater; everything hard as a diamond, same as you'll see it sometimes on a falling glass. I remember I says to myself: "We'll have a piece of weather before a great while. You watch now!"

I must have set there a good quarter-hour before I see my brother coming down in the shadow between the fish-houses, and then I see he wasn't by himself. When he come out in the light I see he was hanging on to his stomach and his face all twisted up.

"What's wrong?" says I. "Sick?"

"I got a hell of a cramp," says he. "I liked to died a minute back. I haul Tony Mears out on the chance," says he. And I hear him try to keep from groaning.

"What you been eating?" I ask him.

"Nothing I know of," says he.

"You go on back to bed," says I. "You take a good shot of gin and go on back to bed. I and Tony'll make a day. Now go on."

He go a few steps and set down on another dory and hang onto his stomach a minute.

"Go on do what I tell you," says I. And then I stand there looking at where he had gone a long while till the St. Michel's says to me:

"Well, how about it, how about it?"

"Oh," says I, "that's right." And I give him a hand with the dory.

There wasn't a streak of air; it was like sliding over a smooth black floor. I was rowing, but I couldn't keep my eyes off that town there, laying so still and pale and clear in the moon.

"Look out where you're going," the St. Michel's says to me by and by. "What's the matter with you?" says he. "You sick, too?"

"Me?" says I.

"Well," says he, "I just think you looked funny, that's all."

We come alongside the *Flores* and we come aboard, and he go up forward to stand by and cast off the mooring.

"When you're ready," says he, "sing out." But I just stand there.

"When you're ready!" he give me again, kind of sharp.

I come and got down the hatch to turn the engine over, but then I just set there with my hands hanging down. Everything look black in front of my eyes and my mouth was sour. By and by he come and look down the hatch.

"Well," says he. "*Are* we going to-day, or *ain't* we going to-day?"

"We ain't going to-day," says I.

I get out on deck and come over to hand the dory painter, and he come after me, chewing his mustache and carrying

on. He want to know what I want to get a man out of bed for.

"I thought you says you wasn't sick," says he.

"I am, though," says I, and I give him two dollars and he shut up.

We put ashore, him rowing and me in the stern-sheets looking at that town. I guess I could tell you the shape of every shadow in that water-front that night.

"Row faster," I says to him.

"What do you take me for?" says he.

"Row faster," says I.

I couldn't go fast enough. But yet when we get the dory hauled up I wouldn't go. I stand there by the dory till the St. Michel's was out of sight before I would go up between them fish-houses and across the front street and up into my own street, where it was like an empty hallway under glass. My mouth was like a shoe, it was so dry, and I keep wanting to walk faster, and I keep walking slower instead, as if it was a steep hill I had to climb, and all them little houses on each side sliding down astern of me into the ocean, one by one, till at last I come to my own. The moon was full on the front of it and I see the door was open.

I come in the gate easy. I never think about it, but I must have come up the steps on tiptoe, because my brother never hear me and he was right there in the hallway. I see him standing there black against the light in the kitchen door beyond; he never hear me, he never know I was anywheres near, but yet I see him shaking all over like he was cold as ice. I hear him breathing. I hear something else, too—I hear a door open and I hear the sound of bare

feet coming across the oilcloth in the kitchen and I see my woman's shadow. And then I scrape my boots on the step and I says out loud:

"Well?" says I.

Nothing move. For a minute everything seem to fetch up. Then by and by I hear my woman take a breath in the kitchen.

"Raphael?" I hear her call, hardly over a whisper. Then I see by her shadow she put one hand to her neck. "John?" she call.

All this while my brother never move a muscle.

"Come out in the yard," I says to him. I turn around and come down the step to the walk.

"Come out in the yard," I says again, after another minute.

He come slow enough. When he got in the moon I see his face the color of dough and his eyes as round as marbles, and him shaking like a man in a chill. In one hand I see his pocket-knife with the big blade open. I see it shining cold and blue.

"What's that for?" says I.

He never open his mouth, but just come down the steps slow, looking at me with his round eyes and shaking all over. I haul out my own knife from my pocket and I heave it over the fence in the road.

It seem like that fetch him up. After a minute he look down at his knife, and then he heave it over the fence and wipe a wrist over his forehead and stick his hands in his pockets, same as me. We stand there. It wasn't that we wasn't ready enough to show each other a thing; it wasn't that, no, no. Only not there with that woman looking on; not when I see the pleasure it give her.

Oh yes, she was there, all right! Wild horses couldn't keep her away. She'd been scared there in the kitchen, but she forget to be scared now. I see her standing in the door with a quilt wrapped around her and her bare toes over the sill. Her cheeks was dark and her lips parted a little and she lean forward a little like a woman at a play, looking out of them bright eyes at me and my brother standing up there in the moon. The pleasure it give her!

When that come over me the moon turn to blood. I start to walk toward her, but there was my brother getting in my way, with his face gone red and his hands twisting together. I give him a look.

"No, you don't!" says he, and he stammer and look foolish.

"Why?" says I.

"No—no—you don't," says he.

My brother was the tallest of the two, but I was the heaviest set. I could have show him a thing, and yet I stand back.

"Why not?" says I, and I speak low. "Tell me the reason why not?"

My brother chew his lips and look at the ground, and my woman give the answer for him. She lean a little further out, with her eyes as bright as stars, and her voice shake with the pleasure it give her.

"Because," says she—"because he's the best man of the two."

I never look at her. I keep looking at my brother.

"Do you imagine," I says, "that you're the best man of the two?"

He wipe his mouth with the back of a hand and scowl.

"Do you imagine *you* are?" says he.

It come down to *that;* all the years I and him was brothers! Imagine!

The air was still. And yet it wasn't still, neither. We hear town hall striking three to the east'rd, and all over the neighborhood we hear footsteps going down the side-streets and men calling to each other under their voices, men going down to their boats. Manuel Duarte come out of his house opposite, and Frank Silva, who was mates with him, come down from the back way, hauling on his oil-coat while he walk. They stand by the fence a minute looking at the weather, and Duarte says:

"I don't know, I don't know." And Silva says, "The Gaspa boys have went and gone back to bed again."

They look across at me and my brother standing there, but it seem like they never see anything out of the way.

"How about it, John?" Silva says to me. "You think you'll go?"

That was the first I give a thought to the weather. It was beginning to get a little light. The moon was still clear in the west'rd side of the sky, but when I give a look to the east'rd I see the weather making up over the Truro shore, a devil's own bank of weather, with red running along the bottom like coals showing through ashes. And with all of it, never a cupful of wind.

"Eh?" says Silva.

"I'll take a chance on it," says I.

And my brother give me no time to look at him, even.

"I'll take a chance on it," says he.

We leave my woman standing there in the door with the quilt around her, and we come out the gate and down to

the shore, each walking on different sides of the street and never saying nothing.

We leave the best part of the fleet on the beach that morning, and the rest we leave at their moorings waiting to have a look at the weather—all except Duarte and Silva. Duarte was one of them large, sour fellows, always cursing and swearing if he imagine anybody was like to get ahead of him, and I see him and Silva coming along astern of us in their double-ender, Duarte in the bow.

We come along and we come along. My mind was so take up with what had happen that I don't remember much. I stand the wheel with my back to my brother, and he set in the stern with his back to me, and never a word between us. We ought to put back, but neither I or him would be the one to sing out.

We come along and we come along; we come around the Point, we come clear of Wood End. I see the water there at Wood End like a pane of purple glass laid down, it was so smooth, and it seem like it was because the air press on it so heavy it couldn't stir. I give a look astern, not at my brother, but over my brother's head; I give a look at the Truro shore, and there I see the city of hell built up into the sky, like towers. I see that, and I see three gill-netters edging in from the south'rd, just drifting in, because there was never a cupful of wind. And I see Duarte and Silva away astern of us, cutting a big circle to put back, and where they cut that circle it look like a pan of blood drawed over a dark-purple paper.

My hand laid light on the wheel, but I never look at my brother or him at me. It was like that Lisbon woman stand on the deck between us with her deviled eyes and her lips

parted, waiting to see which would be the one of us to sing out. But I would have cut my hand off, and so would my brother.

We come along and we come along, and the engine running like a flower. Away ahead I see a Channel schooner, a big knockabout fellow, laying calmed under the Race, with her hull and rigging showing upside down in the water like a picture. I see her there one minute, and then another minute I never see her at all. It come thick, I tell you—it come thick enough! It was like that weather bank had get top-heavy and fall right over on top of everything, and you couldn't see three fathom off the bow. And how it breeze! God, how it breeze!

Of course we was in the lee of the Neck there, with no sea to hit us—none to speak of. But God knows what it was picking up beyond the Race there ahead of us—once clear of the Race and all the water in the world piling up and no lee this side of the Portugee coast!

A man's a fool, all right. I see my brother out of the corner of an eye come up beside me and lean his elbows on the house, and I see his eyes squinting ahead, and I see his soft face, so much better-looking than mine, and I see the wet running down off his chin. It come to me it was time and time enough for one of us to sing out. But I would have cut my hand off, and so would my brother.

He did sing out by and by. He sing out all of a sudden: "*Put her up! Put her up!*"

I swing her over first and I look to see what it was afterward, and there come the weatherside of that knockabout's hull sailing through the thick not a fathom off our rail, high as a church it seem, a-cruising along, cruising like a

railroad train, with half the sails blow out of her. And I see heads come popping over her rail to look down at us, half niggers, and the whole of them with their mouths open to see us bound out in that, and when her stern come by I see her old man hanging over the taffrail and making signs.

She leave a river of milk behind her; she'd have cut us in two like a piece of cheese if my brother hadn't sing out that time. And when I look at him I see he was mad, with his teeth set into his lip and spots on his cheeks—mad because it was him had sing out, in place of me. I had the best of him! I had the best of him!

God! I was glad! I see him standing there in the hallway again; I hear my woman's bare feet coming over the oilcloth, and I hear her calling his name like she done; and then I hear her saying, "Because he's the best man of the two." And now it was him had sing out and I had the best of him, and I give him no time and I look him in the eye.

"You got enough?" says I. "If you got enough, sing out, sing out!"

"Me?" says he.

"Pretty quick now we'll come clear of the Race," says I, "and if you get scared, why, all you got to do is sing out."

"Me?" says he. And with that he begin to laugh. He laugh and he laugh; he hang onto the house and laugh. And then I could have cut his heart because I see I had give it to him—he had make me do the talking and it was him had the best of me now.

"All right," says I, and that's all I says. I feel the deck

go down under me and I see a slide of water coming down out of the thick ahead of us, and then I know we was coming clear of the Race.

That little boat, that *Flores,* she never was meant for a thing like that—not for what she get when we come fair clear of the Race. You don't know, sir. You never see it breezing heavy like that in a thirty-foot gasolener. She done the best she know how, and I done the best I know how to keep her head to it, but I tell you the truth we was awash—awash, sir. They come on top of you before you see them, it was so thick; they break on top the bows white as milk and come astern over you. And then you feel her give and wallow and slide one side of the other and come up slow, slow, to take another one.

And how it breeze! God, how it breeze!

We come along and we come along, how far I never know —a good ways up the Back Side anyhow—a good ways further than we ought. If we come abreast of Peaked Hill I wouldn't be surprised, and all that time neither I or my brother would sing out. We'd have cut our hand off now.

I give him a look and I see he was looking at me; I see his face through a sheet of water; I see the hate of me in his eyes that never give in. But I see his fingers was blue where he hang on the house, and his mouth blue, and the water running down his cheeks was like tears running down, and he wasn't hardly more than a boy.

I take a chance between two seas and I lean over and yell to him:

"You got enough, Raphael, you got enough? Sing out once, Raphael, just once, and I'll put about!"

"Go on," says he, and I see him lean toward me. "I *dare* you!"

"You *dare* me?" says I. "You *dare* me to?" says I. I haul back from him and I could have bit out my tongue then, because he had get me there before I think—he get the best of me. Because the only thing we can do now was keep on going into it. Put her about—let her come broadside on once—and we was good as done for.

Never mind, I was crazy now. I never care what happen now.

"You *dare* me to?" I sing out, and I give the wheel a twist and I hook my arm through it and I laid my head down on the house.

It's funny what I see that minute. I see my brother Raphael six year old, standing in front of my uncle Domingo's shop there in Flores, laughing at nothing—shaking his curls and showing his teeth for nothing but just the pleasure he take in the sunshine and all. . . .

I feel the boat turning over under me; it feel like it was turning over. I hear something part; I hear the crack of it over everything else; and I feel the give. We was rigged with a half-mast and a boom and leg-o'-mutton sail, in case. And it come to me that roll had rack the sheet out of her and let that boom go adrift, and I give a yell to my brother to look out for the boom, and just then something come by, *whhhish!* and carry my oil-hat away. And then I give him another yell to look out when she come back again. But she never come back. I hear one crash, and that was the mast—mast, stays, boom, whole business gone clean over the side and away.

And the water! For a minute there, I tell you the truth, sir, I never believe we was coming clear. I was blind and deaf and dumb with the water, and all I can do was shut my eyes and pray and hang on and hang on. Seem like all the water in the ocean come against my legs, and then I feel something else come against my legs and I put one over and clinch my knees and hang onto him for all there was in me, because I feel it was my brother.

And you know, somehow or other, God knows how, we was coming clear. We had get our backs to it and the deck come lifting out of the water. Not that we was done with it, not by a damn sight—running before it that way she would yaw like a house afire, and it take all the muscle in my two arms to keep her stern-on to the seas. But at least after a minute I could get a chance to look down at my brother, where he laid on his back there between my two boots.

He was cover with drift and he laid still, as still as I could hold him with my feet. But his eyes was open, looking up at me.

And then I couldn't say nothing. Nor I can't give him a hand. The top of a sea come aboard and washed him, all pale green, but yet I couldn't give him a hand on account of the wheel. I see what was the matter—oh, I see what was the matter all right—but yet I couldn't do nothing but hold him there by his oil-clothes, and his eyes looking up at me all the while.

"Was it the boom?" I ask him by and by, and it sound like my voice was somebody else's speaking.

He never answer me, but I see by his eyes it was. It was the boom that time—and it had broke my brother

Raphael's back. And all I could do was hold him as still as I can and look down into his eyes. And them were my brother's eyes again, just like I use to see them, them kid's eyes, so brown and kind and forgiving—God! sir! And I couldn't say nothing and I couldn't give him a hand.

We must have come down the Back Side fast. Seem like when we get on top a sea it throw us half a mile ahead, and yet it seem hours and hours, and every minute of it me praying to God and the Mother of God for just a bit of a lee.

I come by guess; I come clear of the Race by guess. I find lee water right under the shore, and I stop the engine and leave go the wheel, and then I get down beside my brother and give him a kiss, and I see tears running down his face, and they was mine. And I says to him:

"Wait! You're all right, Raphael boy. You'll be all right and you ain't hurt bad. It's all right, Raphael boy. Only you wait here quiet a second while I heave over that anchor and I'll be back."

I give him another kiss on the cheek, and then I tumble up forward and heave that anchor over. It never take me no time. I was back like that. But yet what little sea there was had shift him a mite on the deck, and I see my brother was dead.

I kneel there a spell, I never know how long, without a thing in my head. And then, by and by, I get up and set on the house with my chin in my hand, and I think of that woman.

I set there all that day and I think of that woman. I never know when the wind shift, or when it come on to clear. I see the sun setting over the Plymouth shore the

color of a lemon; I see my brother laying on the deck; I see a whetstone between my knees and a cleaning-knife whet bright in my hand. And I think of that woman.

The moon was just coming up when I come into the harbor that night. When I pick up my mooring and make her fast I put that cleaning-knife inside my shirt, and then I take my brother and lower him into the dory and I come ashore.

Nobody was on the beach. Everything was dead when I carry my brother up the street. All the windows in the houses was black. The moon was on the roofs, but in the street it was still dark. When I come to my house I see it was dark, too, and I was glad.

I come up the step quiet. I come in and I laid my brother down on the sofa in the front room where it was all as black as anything. And after I laid him down I come out across the kitchen and I come into her and my bedroom quiet, and I come to the bed. Then I feel all over the bed quiet, all over it. But my woman wasn't nowhere there.

I call her name out in a kind voice. I call again, but I never hear her anywhere. I put the knife back in my shirt and I come out to the front door, and there I see a woman at the gate.

But it wasn't my woman, though. It was Frank Lopez's woman. I think to myself he must be late at the store and her waiting for him. But he wasn't to the store that night, and it was me she was waiting for.

And when I hear what she had to say—when I hear her telling me in the dark there how her and him—her man and my woman—had go away together that morning—go away on that morning train together—when I hear that I just lean

there in the door a spell and I look at her, and I look at her white face and her claw-fingers, and I never give her back so much as a word for the words she give me.

By and by I turn around and I come into the front room and I set down in a chair beside my brother where he laid on the sofa. And after I set there a spell I begin to laugh. And I laugh and I laugh. . . .

KERFOL [1]

by EDITH WHARTON

I

"YOU ought to buy it," said my host; "it's just the place for a solitary-minded devil like you. And it would be rather worth while to own the most romantic house in Brittany. The present people are dead broke, and it's going for a song—you ought to buy it."

It was not with the least idea of living up to the character my friend Lanrivain ascribed to me (as a matter of fact, under my unsociable exterior I have always had secret yearnings for domesticity) that I took his hint one autumn afternoon and went to Kerfol. My friend was motoring over to Quimper on business: he dropped me on the way, at a cross-road on a heath, and said: "First turn to the right and second to the left. Then straight ahead till you see an avenue. If you meet any peasants, don't ask your way. They don't understand French, and they would pretend they did and mix you up. I'll be back for you here by sunset—and don't forget the tombs in the chapel."

I followed Lanrivain's directions with the hesitation occasioned by the usual difficulty of remembering whether he

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had said the first turn to the right and second to the left, or the contrary. If I had met a peasant I should certainly have asked, and probably been sent astray; but I had the desert landscape to myself, and so stumbled on the right turn and walked across the heath till I came to an avenue. It was so unlike any other avenue I have ever seen that I instantly knew it must be *the* avenue. The grey-trunked trees sprang up straight to a great height and then interwove their pale-grey branches in a long tunnel through which the autumn light fell faintly. I know most trees by name, but I haven't to this day been able to decide what those trees were. They had the tall curve of elms, the tenuity of poplars, the ashen colour of olives under a rainy sky; and they stretched ahead of me for half a mile or more without a break in their arch. If ever I saw an avenue that unmistakably led to something, it was the avenue at Kerfol. My heart beat a little as I began to walk down it.

Presently the trees ended and I came to a fortified gate in a long wall. Between me and the wall was an open space of grass, with other grey avenues radiating from it. Behind the wall were tall slate roofs mossed with silver, a chapel belfry, the top of a keep. A moat filled with wild shrubs and brambles surrounded the place; the drawbridge had been replaced by a stone arch, and the portcullis by an iron gate. I stood for a long time on the hither side of the moat, gazing about me, and letting the influence of the place sink in. I said to myself: "If I wait long enough, the guardian will turn up and show me the tombs—" and I rather hoped he wouldn't turn up too soon.

I sat down on a stone and lit a cigarette. As soon as I

had done it, it struck me as a puerile and portentous thing to do, with that great blind house looking down at me, and all the empty avenues converging on me. It may have been the depth of the silence that made me so conscious of my gesture. The squeak of my match sounded as loud as the scraping of a brake, and I almost fancied I heard it fall when I tossed it onto the grass. But there was more than that: a sense of irrelevance, of littleness, of futile bravado, in sitting there puffing my cigarette smoke into the face of such a past.

I knew nothing of the history of Kerfol—I was new to Brittany, and Lanrivain had never mentioned the name to me till the day before—but one couldn't as much as glance at that pile without feeling in it a long accumulation of history. What kind of history I was not prepared to guess: perhaps only that sheer weight of many associated lives and deaths which gives a majesty to all old houses. But the aspect of Kerfol suggested something more—a perspective of stern and cruel memories stretching away, like its own grey avenues, into a blur of darkness.

Certainly no house had ever more completely and finally broken with the present. As it stood there, lifting its proud roofs and gables to the sky, it might have been its own funeral monument. "Tombs in the chapel? The whole place is a tomb!" I reflected. I hoped more and more that the guardian would not come. The details of the place, however striking, would seem trivial compared with its collective impressiveness; and I wanted only to sit there and be penetrated by the weight of its silence.

"It's the very place for you!" Lanrivain had said; and I was overcome by the almost blasphemous frivolity of sug-

gesting to any living being that Kerfol was the place for him. "Is it possible that any one could *not* see—?" I wondered. I did not finish the thought: what I meant was undefinable. I stood up and wandered toward the gate. I was beginning to want to know more; not to *see* more—I was by now so sure it was not a question of seeing—but to feel more: feel all the place had to communicate. "But to get in one will have to rout out the keeper," I thought reluctantly, and hesitated. Finally I crossed the bridge and tried the iron gate. It yielded, and I walked through the tunnel formed by the thickness of the *chemin de ronde*. At the farther end, a wooden barricade had been laid across the entrance, and beyond it was a court enclosed in noble architecture. The main building faced me; and I now saw that one half was a mere ruined front, with gaping windows through which the wild growths of the moat and the trees of the park were visible. The rest of the house was still in its robust beauty. One end abutted on the round tower, the other on the small traceried chapel, and in an angle of the building stood a graceful well-head crowned with mossy urns. A few roses grew against the walls, and on an upper window-sill I remember noticing a pot of fuchsias.

My sense of the pressure of the invisible began to yield to my architectural interest. The building was so fine that I felt a desire to explore it for its own sake. I looked about the court, wondering in which corner the guardian lodged. Then I pushed open the barrier and went in. As I did so, a dog barred my way. He was such a remarkably beautiful little dog that for a moment he made me forget the splendid place he was defending. I was not sure of his breed at the time, but have since learned that it was Chinese, and that

he was of a rare variety called the "Sleeve-dog." He was very small and golden brown, with large brown eyes and a ruffled throat: he looked like a large tawny chrysanthemum. I said to myself: "These little beasts always snap and scream, and somebody will be out in a minute."

The little animal stood before me, forbidding, almost menacing: there was anger in his large brown eyes. But he made no sound, he came no nearer. Instead, as I advanced, he gradually fell back, and I noticed that another dog, a vague rough brindled thing, had limped up on a lame leg. "There'll be a hubbub now," I thought; for at the same moment a third dog, a long-haired white mongrel, slipped out of a doorway and joined the others. All three stood looking at me with grave eyes; but not a sound came from them. As I advanced they continued to fall back on muffled paws, still watching me. "At a given point, they'll all charge at my ankles: it's one of the jokes that dogs who live together put up on one," I thought. I was not alarmed, for they were neither large nor formidable. But they let me wander about the court as I pleased, following me at a little distance —always the same distance—and always keeping their eyes on me. Presently I looked across at the ruined façade, and saw that in one of its empty window-frames another dog stood: a white pointer with one brown ear. He was an old grave dog, much more experienced than the others; and he seemed to be observing me with a deeper intentness.

"I'll hear from *him*," I said to myself; but he stood in the window-frame, against the trees of the park, and continued to watch me without moving. I stared back at him for a time, to see if the sense that he was being watched would not rouse him. Half the width of the court lay be-

tween us, and we gazed at each other silently across it. But he did not stir, and at last I turned away. Behind me I found the rest of the pack, with a newcomer added: a small black greyhound with pale agate-coloured eyes. He was shivering a little, and his expression was more timid than that of the others. I noticed that he kept a little behind them. And still there was not a sound.

I stood there for fully five minutes, the circle about me —waiting, as they seemed to be waiting. At last I went up to the little golden-brown dog and stooped to pat him. As I did so, I heard myself give a nervous laugh. The little dog did not start, or growl, or take his eyes from me— he simply slipped back about a yard, and then paused and continued to look at me. "Oh, hang it!" I exclaimed, and walked across the court toward the well.

As I advanced, the dogs separated and slid away into different corners of the court. I examined the urns on the well, tried a locked door or two, and looked up and down the dumb façade; then I faced about toward the chapel. When I turned I perceived that all the dogs had disappeared except the old pointer, who still watched me from the window. It was rather a relief to be rid of that cloud of witnesses; and I began to look about me for a way to the back of the house. "Perhaps there'll be somebody in the garden," I thought. I found a way across the moat, scrambled over a wall smothered in brambles, and got into the garden. A few lean hydrangeas and geraniums pined in the flower-beds, and the ancient house looked down on them indifferently. Its garden side was plainer and severer than the other: the long granite front, with its few windows and steep roof, looked like a fortress-prison. I walked

around the farther wing, went up some disjointed steps, and entered the deep twilight of a narrow and incredibly old box-walk. The walk was just wide enough for one person to slip through, and its branches met overhead. It was like the ghost of a box-walk, its lustrous green all turning to the shadowy greyness of the avenues. I walked on and on, the branches hitting me in the face and springing back with a dry rattle; and at length I came out on the grassy top of the *chemin de ronde*. I walked along it to the gate-tower, looking down into the court, which was just below me. Not a human being was in sight; and neither were the dogs. I found a flight of steps in the thickness of the wall and went down them; and when I emerged again into the court, there stood the circle of dogs, the golden-brown one a little ahead of the others, the black greyhound shivering in the rear.

"Oh, hang it—you uncomfortable beasts, you!" I exclaimed, my voice startling me with a sudden echo. The dogs stood motionless, watching me. I knew by this time that they would not try to prevent my approaching the house, and the knowledge left me free to examine them. I had a feeling that they must be horribly cowed to be so silent and inert. Yet they did not look hungry or ill-treated. Their coats were smooth and they were not thin, except the shivering greyhound. It was more as if they had lived a long time with people who never spoke to them or looked at them: as though the silence of the place had gradually benumbed their busy inquisitive natures. And this strange passivity, this almost human lassitude, seemed to me sadder than the misery of starved and beaten animals.

I should have liked to rouse them for a minute, to coax them into a game or a scamper; but the longer I looked into their fixed and weary eyes the more preposterous the idea became. With the windows of that house looking down on us, how could I have imagined such a thing? The dogs knew better: *they* knew what the house would tolerate and what it would not. I even fancied that they knew what was passing through my mind, and pitied me for my frivolity. But even that feeling probably reached them through a thick fog of listlessness. I had an idea that their distance from me was as nothing to my remoteness from them. The impression they produced was that of having in common one memory so deep and dark that nothing that had happened since was worth either a growl or a wag.

"I say," I broke out abruptly, addressing myself to the dumb circle, "do you know what you look like, the whole lot of you? You look as if you'd seen a ghost—that's how you look! I wonder if there *is* a ghost here, and nobody but you left for it to appear to?" The dogs continued to gaze at me without moving. . . .

It was dark when I saw Lanrivain's motor lamps at the cross-roads—and I wasn't exactly sorry to see them. I had the sense of having escaped from the loneliest place in the whole world, and of not liking loneliness—to that degree—as much as I had imagined I should. My friend had brought his solicitor back from Quimper for the night, and seated beside a fat and affable stranger I felt no inclination to talk of Kerfol. . . .

But that evening, when Lanrivain and the solicitor were closeted in the study, Madame de Lanrivain began to question me in the drawing-room.

"Well—are you going to buy Kerfol?" she asked, tilting up her gay chin from her embroidery.

"I haven't decided yet. The fact is, I couldn't get into the house," I said, as if I had simply postponed my decision, and meant to go back for another look.

"You couldn't get in? Why, what happened? The family are mad to sell the place, and the old guardian has orders—"

"Very likely. But the old guardian wasn't there."

"What a pity! He must have gone to market. But his daughter—?"

"There was nobody about. At least I saw no one."

"How extraordinary! Literally nobody?"

"Nobody but a lot of dogs—a whole pack of them—who seemed to have the place to themselves."

Madame de Lanrivain let the embroidery slip to her knee and folded her hands on it. For several minutes she looked at me thoughtfully.

"A pack of dogs—you *saw* them?"

"Saw them? I saw nothing else!"

"How many?" She dropped her voice a little. "I've always wondered—"

I looked at her with surprise: I had supposed the place to be familiar to her. "Have you never been to Kerfol?" I asked.

"Oh, yes: often. But never on that day."

"What day?"

"I'd quite forgotten—and so had Hervé, I'm sure. If

we'd remembered, we never should have sent you to-day—but then, after all, one doesn't half believe that sort of thing, does one?"

"What sort of thing?" I asked, involuntarily sinking my voice to the level of hers. Inwardly I was thinking: "I *knew* there was something . . ."

Madame de Lanrivain cleared her throat and produced a reassuring smile. "Didn't Hervé tell you the story of Kerfol? An ancestor of his was mixed up in it. You know every Breton house has its ghost-story; and some of them are rather unpleasant."

"Yes—but those dogs?"

"Well, those dogs are the ghosts of Kerfol. At least, the peasants say there's one day in the year when a lot of dogs appear there; and that day the keeper and his daughter go off to Morlaix and get drunk. The women in Brittany drink dreadfully." She stopped to match a silk; then she lifted her charming inquisitive Parisian face. "Did you *really* see a lot of dogs? There isn't one at Kerfol," she said.

II

Lanrivain, the next day, hunted out a shabby calf volume from the back of an upper shelf of his library.

"Yes—here it is. What does it call itself? *A History of the Assizes of the Duchy of Brittany. Quimper,* 1702. The book was written about a hundred years later than the Kerfol affair; but I believe the account is transcribed pretty literally from the judicial records. Anyhow, it's queer reading. And there's a Hervé de Lanrivain mixed up in it—

not exactly *my* style, as you'll see. But then he's only a collateral. Here, take the book up to bed with you. I don't exactly remember the details; but after you've read it I'll bet anything you'll leave your light burning all night!"

I left my light burning all night, as he had predicted; but it was chiefly because, till near dawn, I was absorbed in my reading. The account of the trial of Anne de Cornault, wife of the lord of Kerfol, was long and closely printed. It was, as my friend had said, probably an almost literal transcription of what took place in the court-room; and the trial lasted nearly a month. Besides, the type of the book was very bad. . . .

At first I thought of translating the old record. But it is full of wearisome repetitions, and the main lines of the story are forever straying off into side issues. So I have tried to disentangle it, and give it here in a simpler form. At times, however, I have reverted to the text because no other words could have conveyed so exactly the sense of what I felt at Kerfol; and nowhere have I added anything of my own.

III

It was in the year 16— that Yves de Cornault, lord of the domain of Kerfol, went to the *pardon* of Locronan to perform his religious duties. He was a rich and powerful noble, then in his sixty-second year, but hale and sturdy, a great horseman and hunter and a pious man. So all his neighbours attested. In appearance he was short and broad, with a swarthy face, legs slightly bowed from the saddle, a hanging nose and broad hands with black hairs on them.

He had married young and lost his wife and son soon after, and since then had lived alone at Kerfol. Twice a year he went to Morlaix, where he had a handsome house by the river, and spent a week or ten days there; and occasionally he rode to Rennes on business. Witnesses were found to declare that during these absences he led a life different from the one he was known to lead at Kerfol, where he busied himself with his estate, attended mass daily, and found his only amusement in hunting the wild boar and water-fowl. But these rumours are not particularly relevant, and it is certain that among people of his own class in the neighbourhood he passed for a stern and even austere man, observant of his religious obligations, and keeping strictly to himself. There was no talk of any familiarity with the women on his estate, though at that time the nobility were very free with their peasants. Some people said he had never looked at a woman since his wife's death; but such things are hard to prove, and the evidence on this point was not worth much.

Well, in his sixty-second year, Yves de Cornault went to the *pardon* at Locronan, and saw there a young lady of Douarnenez, who had ridden over pillion behind her father to do her duty to the saint. Her name was Anne de Barrigan, and she came of good old Breton stock, but much less great and powerful than that of Yves de Cornault; and her father had squandered his fortune at cards, and lived almost like a peasant in his little granite manor on the moors. . . . I have said I would add nothing of my own to this bald statement of a strange case; but I must interrupt myself here to describe the young lady who rode up to the lych-gate of Locronan at the very moment when the Baron de Cornault was also dismounting there. I take my description

from a faded drawing in red crayon, sober and truthful enough to be by a late pupil of the Clouets, which hangs in Lanrivain's study, and is said to be a portrait of Anne de Barrigan. It is unsigned and has no mark of identity but the initials A. B., and the date 16—, the year after her marriage. It represents a young woman with a small oval face, almost pointed, yet wide enough for a full mouth with a tender depression at the corners. The nose is small, and the eyebrows are set rather high, far apart, and as lightly pencilled as the eyebrows in a Chinse painting. The forehead is high and serious, and the hair, which one feels to be fine and thick and fair, is drawn off it and lies close like a cap. The eyes are neither large nor small, hazel probably, with a look at once shy and steady. A pair of beautiful long hands are crossed below the lady's breast. . . .

The chaplain of Kerfol, and other witnesses, averred that when the Baron came back from Locronan he jumped from his horse, ordered another to be instantly saddled, called to a young page to come with him, and rode away that same evening to the south. His steward followed the next morning with coffers laden on a pair of pack mules. The following week Yves de Cornault rode back to Kerfol, sent for his vassals and tenants, and told them he was to be married at All Saints to Anne de Barrigan of Douarnenez. And on All Saints' Day the marriage took place.

As to the next few years, the evidence on both sides seems to show that they passed happily for the couple. No one was found to say that Yves de Cornault had been unkind to his wife, and it was plain to all that he was content with his bargain. Indeed, it was admitted by the chaplain and other witnesses for the prosecution that the young lady

had a softening influence on her husband, and that he became less exacting with his tenants, less harsh to peasants and dependents, and less subject to the fits of gloomy silence which had darkened his widowhood. As to his wife, the only grievance her champions could call up in her behalf was that Kerfol was a lonely place, and that when her husband was away on business at Rennes or Morlaix—whither she was never taken—she was not allowed so much as to walk in the park unaccompanied. But no one asserted that she was unhappy, though one servant-woman said she had surprised her crying, and had heard her say that she was a woman accursed to have no child, and nothing in life to call her own. But that was a natural enough feeling in a wife attached to her husband; and certainly it must have been a great grief to Yves de Cornault that she bore no son. Yet he never made her feel her childlessness as a reproach—she admits this in her evidence—but seemed to try to make her forget it by showering gifts and favours on her. Rich though he was, he had never been open-handed; but nothing was too fine for his wife, in the way of silks or gems or linen, or whatever else she fancied. Every wandering merchant was welcome at Kerfol, and when the master was called away he never came back without bringing his wife a handsome present—something curious and particular—from Morlaix or Rennes or Quimper. One of the waiting-women gave, in cross-examination, an interesting list of one year's gifts, which I copy. From Morlaix, a carved ivory junk, with Chinamen at the oars, that a strange sailor had brought back as a votive offering for Notre Dame de la Clarté, above Ploumanac'h; from Quimper, an embroidered gown, worked by the nuns of the Assumption;

from Rennes, a silver rose that opened and showed an amber Virgin with a crown of garnets; from Morlaix, again, a length of Damascus velvet shot with gold, bought of a Jew from Syria; and for Michaelmas that same year, from Rennes, a necklet or bracelet of round stones—emeralds and pearls and rubies—strung like beads on a fine gold chain. This was the present that pleased the lady best, the woman said. Later on, as it happened, it was produced at the trial, and appears to have struck the Judges and the public as a curious and valuable jewel.

The very same winter, the Baron absented himself again, this time as far as Bordeaux, and on his return he brought his wife something even odder and prettier than the bracelet. It was a winter evening when he rode up to Kerfol and, walking into the hall, found her sitting by the hearth, her chin on her hand, looking into the fire. He carried a velvet box in his hand and, setting it down, lifted the lid and let out a little golden-brown dog.

Anne de Cornault exclaimed with pleasure as the little creature bounded toward her. "Oh, it looks like a bird or a butterfly!" she cried as she picked it up; and the dog put its paws on her shoulders and looked at her with eyes "like a Christian's." After that she would never have it out of her sight, and petted and talked to it as if it had been a child—as indeed it was the nearest thing to a child she was to know. Yves de Cornault was much pleased with his purchase. The dog had been brought to him by a sailor from an East India merchantman, and the sailor had bought it of a pilgrim in a bazaar at Jaffa, who had stolen it from a nobleman's wife in China: a perfectly permissible thing to do, since the pilgrim was a Christian and the noble-

man a heathen doomed to hell-fire. Yves de Cornault had paid a long price for the dog, for they were beginning to be in demand at the French court, and the sailor knew he had got hold of a good thing; but Anne's pleasure was so great that, to see her laugh and play with the little animal, her husband would doubtless have given twice the sum.

So far, all the evidence is at one, and the narrative plain sailing; but now the steering becomes difficult. I will try to keep as nearly as possible to Anne's own statements; though toward the end, poor thing . . .

Well, to go back. The very year after the little brown dog was brought to Kerfol, Yves de Cornault, one winter night, was found dead at the head of a narrow flight of stairs leading down from his wife's rooms to a door opening on the court. It was his wife who found him and gave the alarm, so distracted, poor wretch, with fear and horror —for his blood was all over her—that at first the roused household could not make out what she was saying, and thought she had suddenly gone mad. But there, sure enough, at the top of the stairs lay her husband, stone dead, and head foremost, the blood from his wounds dripping down to the steps below him. He had been dreadfully scratched and gashed about the face and throat, as if with curious pointed weapons; and one of his legs had a deep tear in it which had cut an artery, and probably caused his death. But how did he come there, and who had murdered him?

His wife declared that she had been asleep in her bed, and hearing his cry had rushed out to find him lying on the stairs; but this was immediately questioned. In the first place, it was proved that from her room she could not have

heard the struggle on the stairs, owing to the thickness of the walls and the length of the intervening passage; then it was evident that she had not been in bed and asleep, since she was dressed when she roused the house, and her bed had not been slept in. Moreover, the door at the bottom of the stairs was ajar, and it was noticed by the chaplain (an observant man) that the dress she wore was stained with blood about the knees, and that there were traces of small blood-stained hands low down on the staircase walls, so that it was conjectured that she had really been at the postern-door when her husband fell and, feeling her way up to him in the darkness on her hands and knees, had been stained by his blood dripping down on her. Of course it was argued on the other side that the blood-marks on her dress might have been caused by her kneeling down by her husband when she rushed out of her room; but there was the open door below, and the fact that the finger-marks in the staircase all pointed upward.

The accused held to her statement for the first two days, in spite of its improbability; but on the third day word was brought to her that Hervé de Lanrivain, a young nobleman of the neighbourhood, had been arrested for complicity in the crime. Two or three witnesses thereupon came forward to say that it was known throughout the country that Lanrivain had formerly been on good terms with the lady of Cornault; but that he had been absent from Brittany for over a year, and people had ceased to associate their names. The witnesses who made this statement were not of a very reputable sort. One was an old herb-gatherer suspected of witchcraft, another a drunken clerk from a neighbouring parish, the third a half-witted shepherd who

could be made to say anything; and it was clear that the prosecution was not satisfied with its case, and would have liked to find more definite proof of Lanrivain's complicity than the statement of the herb-gatherer, who swore to having seen him climbing the wall of the park on the night of the murder. One way of patching out incomplete proofs in those days was to put some sort of pressure, moral or physical, on the accused person. It is not clear what pressure was put on Anne de Cornault; but on the third day, when she was brought in court, she "appeared weak and wandering," and after being encouraged to collect herself and speak the truth, on her honour and the wounds of her Blessed Redeemer, she confessed that she had in fact gone down the stairs to speak with Hervé de Lanrivain (who denied everything), and had been surprised there by the sound of her husband's fall. That was better; and the prosecution rubbed its hands with satisfaction. The satisfaction increased when various dependents living at Kerfol were induced to say—with apparent sincerity—that during the year or two preceding his death their master had once more grown uncertain and irascible, and subject to the fits of brooding silence which his household had learned to dread before his second marriage. This seemed to show that things had not been going well at Kerfol; though no one could be found to say that there had been any signs of open disagreement between husband and wife.

Anne de Cornault, when questioned as to her reason for going down at night to open the door to Hervé de Lanrivain, made an answer which must have sent a smile around the court. She said it was because she was lonely and wanted to talk with the young man. Was this the only reason?

she was asked; and replied: "Yes, by the Cross over your Lordships' heads." "But why at midnight?" the court asked. "Because I could see him in no other way." I can see the exchange of glances across the ermine collars under the Crucifix.

Anne de Cornault, further questioned, said that her married life had been extremely lonely: "desolate" was the word she used. It was true that her husband seldom spoke harshly to her; but there were days when he did not speak at all. It was true that he had never struck or threatened her; but he kept her like a prisoner at Kerfol, and when he rode away to Morlaix or Quimper or Rennes he set so close a watch on her that she could not pick a flower in the garden without having a waiting-woman at her heels. "I am no Queen, to need such honours," she once said to him; and he had answered that a man who has a treasure does not leave the key in the lock when he goes out. "Then take me with you," she urged; but to this he said that towns were pernicious places, and young wives better off at their own firesides.

"But what did you want to say to Hervé de Lanrivain?" the court asked; and she answered: "To ask him to take me away."

"Ah—you confess that you went down to him with adulterous thoughts?"

"No."

"Then why did you want him to take you away?"

"Because I was afraid for my life."

"Of whom were you afraid?"

"Of my husband."

"Why were you afraid of your husband?"

"Because he had strangled my little dog."

Another smile must have passed around the court-room: in days when any nobleman had a right to hang his peasants —and most of them exercised it—pinching a pet animal's wind-pipe was nothing to make a fuss about.

At this point one of the Judges, who appears to have had a certain sympathy for the accused, suggested that she should be allowed to explain herself in her own way; and she thereupon made the following statement.

The first years of her marriage had been lonely; but her husband had not been unkind to her. If she had had a child she would not have been unhappy; but the days were long, and it rained too much.

It was true that her husband, whenever he went away and left her, brought her a handsome present on his return; but this did not make up for the loneliness. At least nothing had, till he brought her the little brown dog from the East: after that she was much less unhappy. Her husband seemed pleased that she was so fond of the dog; he gave her leave to put her jewelled bracelet around its neck, and to keep it always with her.

One day she had fallen asleep in her room, with the dog at her feet, as his habit was. Her feet were bare and resting on his back. Suddenly she was waked by her husband: he stood beside her, smiling not unkindly.

"You look like my great-grandmother, Juliane de Cornault, lying in the chapel with her feet on a little dog," he said.

The analogy sent a chill through her, but she laughed and answered: "Well, when I am dead you must put me beside her, carved in marble, with my dog at my feet."

"Oho—we'll wait and see," he said, laughing also, but with his black brows close together. "The dog is the emblem of fidelity."

"And do you doubt my right to lie with mine at my feet?"

"When I'm in doubt I find out," he answered. "I am an old man," he added, "and people say I make you lead a lonely life. But I swear you shall have your monument if you earn it."

"And I swear to be faithful," she returned, "if only for the sake of having my little dog at my feet."

Not long afterward he went on business to the Quimper Assizes; and while he was away his aunt, the widow of a great nobleman of the duchy, came to spend a night at Kerfol on her way to the *pardon* of Ste. Barbe. She was a woman of piety and consequence, and much respected by Yves de Cornault, and when she proposed to Anne to go with her to Ste. Barbe no one could object, and even the chaplain declared himself in favour of the pilgrimage. So Anne set out for Ste. Barbe, and there for the first time she talked with Hervé de Lanrivain. He had come once or twice to Kerfol with his father, but she had never before exchanged a dozen words with him. They did not talk for more than five minutes now: it was under the chestnuts, as the procession was coming out of the chapel. He said: "I pity you," and she was surprised, for she had not supposed that any one thought her an object of pity. He added: "Call for me when you need me," and she smiled a little, but was glad afterward, and thought often of the meeting.

She confessed to having seen him three times afterward: not more. How or where she would not say—one had the

impression that she feared to implicate some one. Their meetings had been rare and brief; and at the last he had told her that he was starting the next day for a foreign country, on a mission which was not without peril and might keep him for many months absent. He asked her for a remembrance, and she had none to give him but the collar about the little dog's neck. She was sorry afterward that she had given it, but he was so unhappy at going that she had not had the courage to refuse.

Her husband was away at the time. When he returned a few days later he picked up the animal to pet it, and noticed that its collar was missing. His wife told him that the dog had lost it in the undergrowth of the park, and that she and her maids had hunted a whole day for it. It was true, she explained to the court, that she had made the maids search for the necklet—they all believed the dog had lost it in the park. . . .

Her husband made no comment, and that evening at supper he was in his usual mood, between good and bad: you could never tell which. He talked a good deal, describing what he had seen and done at Rennes; but now and then he stopped and looked hard at her, and when she went to bed she found her little dog strangled on her pillow. The little thing was dead, but still warm; she stooped to lift it, and her distress turned to horror when she discovered that it had been strangled by twisting twice round its throat the necklet she had given to Lanrivain.

The next morning at dawn she buried the dog in the garden, and hid the necklet in her breast. She said nothing to her husband, then or later, and he said nothing to her; but that day he had a peasant hanged for stealing a faggot

in the park, and the next day he nearly beat to death a young horse he was breaking.

Winter set in, and the short days passed, and the long nights, one by one; and she heard nothing of Hervé de Lanrivain. It might be that her husband had killed him; or merely that he had been robbed of the necklet. Day after day by the hearth among the spinning maids, night after night alone on her bed, she wondered and trembled. Sometimes at table her husband looked across at her and smiled; and then she felt sure that Lanrivain was dead. She dared not try to get news of him, for she was sure her husband would find out if she did: she had an idea that he could find out anything. Even when a witch-woman who was a noted seer, and could show you the whole world in her crystal, came to the castle for a night's shelter, and the maids flocked to her, Anne held back.

The winter was long and black and rainy. One day, in Yves de Cornault's absence, some gypsies came to Kerfol with a troop of performing dogs. Anne bought the smallest and cleverest, a white dog with a feathery coat and one blue and one brown eye. It seemed to have been ill-treated by the gypsies, and clung to her plaintively when she took it from them. That evening her husband came back, and when she went to bed she found the dog strangled on her pillow.

After that she said to herself that she would never have another dog; but one bitter cold evening a poor lean greyhound was found whining at the castle-gate, and she took him in and forbade the maids to speak of him to her husband. She hid him in a room that no one went to, smuggled

food to him from her own plate, made him a warm bed to lie on and petted him like a child.

Yves de Cornault came home, and the next day she found the greyhound strangled on her pillow. She wept in secret, but said nothing, and resolved that even if she met a dog dying of hunger she would never bring him into the castle; but one day she found a young sheep-dog, a brindled puppy with good blue eyes, lying with a broken leg in the snow of the park. Yves de Cornault was at Rennes, and she brought the dog in, warmed and fed it, tied up its leg and hid it in the castle till her husband's return. The day before, she gave it to a peasant woman who lived a long way off, and paid her handsomely to care for it and say nothing; but that night she heard a whining and scratching at her door, and when she opened it the lame puppy, drenched and shivering, jumped upon her with little sobbing barks. She hid him in her bed, and the next morning was about to have him taken back to the peasant woman when she heard her husband ride into the court. She shut the dog in a chest, and went down to receive him. An hour or two later, when she returned to her room, the puppy lay strangled on her pillow. . . .

After that she dared not make a pet of any other dog; and her loneliness became almost unendurable. Sometimes, when she crossed the court of the castle, and thought no one was looking, she stopped to pat the old pointer at the gate. But one day as she was caressing him her husband came out of the chapel; and the next day the old dog was gone. . . .

This curious narrative was not told in one sitting of

the court, or received without impatience and incredulous comment. It was plain that the Judges were surprised by its puerility, and that it did not help the accused in the eyes of the public. It was an odd tale, certainly; but what did it prove? That Yves de Cornault disliked dogs, and that his wife, to gratify her own fancy, persistently ignored this dislike. As for pleading this trivial disagreement as an excuse for her relations—whatever their nature—with her supposed accomplice, the argument was so absurd that her own lawyer manifestly regretted having let her make use of it, and tried several times to cut short her story. But she went on to the end, with a kind of hypnotized insistence, as though the scenes she evoked were so real to her that she had forgotten where she was and imagined herself to be re-living them.

At length the Judge who had previously shown a certain kindness to her said (leaning forward a little, one may suppose, from his row of dozing colleagues): "Then you would have us believe that you murdered your husband because he would not let you keep a pet dog?"

"I did not murder my husband."

"Who did, then? Hervé de Lanrivain?"

"No."

"Who then? Can you tell us?"

"Yes, I can tell you. The dogs—" At that point she was carried out of the court in a swoon.

. . . . . .

It was evident that her lawyer tried to get her to abandon this line of defense. Possibly her explanation, whatever it was, had seemed convincing when she poured it out to him in the heat of their first private colloquy; but now that it

was exposed to the cold daylight of judicial scrutiny, and the banter of the town, he was thoroughly ashamed of it, and would have sacrificed her without a scruple to save his professional reputation. But the obstinate Judge—who perhaps, after all, was more inquisitive than kindly—evidently wanted to hear the story out, and she was ordered, the next day, to continue her deposition.

She said that after the disappearance of the old watch-dog nothing particular happened for a month or two. Her husband was much as usual: she did not remember any special incident. But one evening a pedlar woman came to the castle and was selling trinkets to the maids. She had no heart for trinkets, but she stood looking on while the women made their choice. And then, she did not know how, but the pedlar coaxed her into buying for herself a pear-shaped pomander with a strong scent in it—she had once seen something of the kind on a gypsy woman. She had no desire for the pomander, and did not know why she had bought it. The pedlar said that whoever wore it had the power to read the future; but she did not really believe that, or care much either. However, she bought the thing and took it up to her room, where she sat turning it about in her hand. Then the strange scent attracted her and she began to wonder what kind of spice was in the box. She opened it and found a grey bean rolled in a strip of paper; and on the paper she saw a sign she knew, and a message from Hervé de Lanrivain, saying that he was at home again and would be at the door in the court that night after the moon had set. . . .

She burned the paper and sat down to think. It was nightfall, and her husband was at home. . . . She had no

way of warning Lanrivain, and there was nothing to do but to wait. . . .

At this point I fancy the drowsy court-room beginning to wake up. Even to the oldest hand on the bench there must have been a certain relish in picturing the feelings of a woman on receiving such a message at nightfall from a man living twenty miles away, to whom she had no means of sending a warning. . . .

She was not a clever woman, I imagine; and as the first result of her cogitation she appears to have made the mistake of being, that evening, too kind to her husband. She could not ply him with wine, according to the traditional expedient, for though he drank heavily at times he had a strong head; and when he drank beyond its strength it was because he chose to, and not because a woman coaxed him. Not his wife, at any rate—she was an old story by now. As I read the case, I fancy there was no feeling for her left in him but the hatred occasioned by his supposed dishonour.

At any rate, she tried to call up her old graces; but early in the evening he complained of pains and fever, and left the hall to go up to the closet where he sometimes slept. His servant carried him a cup of hot wine, and brought back word that he was sleeping and not to be disturbed; and an hour later, when Anne lifted the tapestry and listened at his door, she heard his loud regular breathing. She thought it might be a feint, and stayed a long time barefooted in the passage, her ear to the crack; but the breathing went on too steadily and naturally to be other than that of a man in a sound sleep. She crept back to her room reassured, and stood in the window watching the moon set through the trees of the park. The sky was misty and starless, and

after the moon went down the night was black as pitch. She knew the time had come, and stole along the passage, past her husband's door—where she stopped again to listen to his breathing—to the top of the stairs. There she paused a moment, and assured herself that no one was following her; then she began to go down the stairs in the darkness. They were so steep and winding that she had to go very slowly, for fear of stumbling. Her one thought was to get the door unbolted, tell Lanrivain to make his escape, and hasten back to her room. She had tried the bolt earlier in the evening, and managed to put a little grease on it; but nevertheless, when she drew it, it gave a squeak . . . not loud, but it made her heart stop; and the next minute, overhead, she heard a noise. . . .

"What noise?" the prosecution interposed.

"My husband's voice calling out my name and cursing me."

"What did you hear after that?"

"A terrible scream and a fall."

"Where was Hervé de Lanrivain at this time?"

"He was standing outside in the court. I just made him out in the darkness. I told him for God's sake to go, and then I pushed the door shut."

"What did you do next?"

"I stood at the foot of the stairs and listened."

"What did you hear?"

"I heard dogs snarling and panting." (Visible discouragement of the bench, boredom of the public, and exasperation of the lawyer for the defense. Dogs again—! But the inquisitive Judge insisted.)

"What dogs?"

She bent her head and spoke so low that she had to be told to repeat her answer: "I don't know."

"How do you mean—you don't know?"

"I don't know what dogs. . . ."

The Judge again intervened: "Try to tell us exactly what happened. How long did you remain at the foot of the stairs?"

"Only a few minutes."

"And what was going on meanwhile overhead?"

"The dogs kept on snarling and panting. Once or twice he cried out. I think he moaned once. Then he was quiet."

"Then what happened?"

"Then I heard a sound like the noise of a pack when the wolf is thrown to them—gulping and lapping."

(There was a groan of disgust and repulsion through the court, and another attempted intervention by the distracted lawyer. But the inquisitive Judge was still inquisitive.)

"And all the while you did not go up?"

"Yes—I went up then—to drive them off."

"The dogs?"

"Yes."

"Well—?"

"When I got there it was quite dark. I found my husband's flint and steel and struck a spark. I saw him lying there. He was dead."

"And the dogs?"

"The dogs were gone."

"Gone—where to?"

"I don't know. There was no way out—and there were no dogs at Kerfol."

She straightened herself to her full height, threw her arms above her head, and fell down on the stone floor with a long scream. There was a moment of confusion in the court-room. Some one on the bench was heard to say: "This is clearly a case for the ecclesiastical authorities"—and the prisoner's lawyer doubtless jumped at the suggestion.

After this, the trial loses itself in a maze of cross-questioning and squabbling. Every witness who was called corroborated Anne de Cornault's statement that there were no dogs at Kerfol: had been none for several months. The master of the house had taken a dislike to dogs, there was no denying it. But, on the other hand, at the inquest, there had been long and bitter discussions as to the nature of the dead man's wounds. One of the surgeons called in had spoken of marks that looked like bites. The suggestion of witchcraft was revived, and the opposing lawyers hurled tomes of necromancy at each other.

At last Anne de Cornault was brought back into court —at the instance of the same Judge—and asked if she knew where the dogs she spoke of could have come from. On the body of her Redeemer she swore that she did not. Then the Judge put his final question: "If the dogs you think you heard had been known to you, do you think you would have recognized them by their barking?"

"Yes."

"Did you recognize them?"

"Yes."

"What dogs do you take them to have been?"

"My dead dogs," she said in a whisper. . . . She was taken out of court, not to reappear there again. There was some kind of ecclesiastical investigation, and the end of the busi-

ness was that the Judges disagreed with each other, and with the ecclesiastical committee, and that Anne de Cornault was finally handed over to the keeping of her husband's family, who shut her up in the keep of Kerfol, where she is said to have died many years later, a harmless mad-woman.

So ends her story. As for that of Hervé de Lanrivain, I had only to apply to his collateral descendant for its subsequent details. The evidence against the young man being insufficient, and his family influence in the duchy considerable, he was set free, and left soon afterward for Paris. He was probably in no mood for a worldly life, and he appears to have come almost immediately under the influence of the famous M. Arnauld d'Andilly and the gentlemen of Port Royal. A year or two later he was received into their Order, and without achieving any particular distinction he followed its good and evil fortunes till his death some twenty years later. Lanrivain showed me a portrait of him by a pupil of Philippe de Champaigne: sad eyes, an impulsive mouth and a narrow brow. Poor Hervé de Lanrivain: it was a grey ending. Yet as I looked at his stiff and sallow effigy, in the dark dress of the Jansenists, I almost found myself envying his fate. After all, in the course of his life two great things had happened to him: he had loved romantically, and he must have talked with Pascal. . . .

ONE CROWDED HOUR [1]

by Ben Ames Williams

Jeff Ranney lived on the road from East Harbor to Fraternity, some eight miles from the bay. He was, at the period of which I write, a man fifty-seven years old, and his life had been as completely uneventful as life can be. He had never had an adventure, had never suffered a catastrophe, had never achieved any great thing, had never even been called upon to endure a particularly poignant grief. He was born in the house where he still lived and save for one trip to Portland had never crossed the county line. He married the daughter of a man whose farm lay on the other side of Fraternity. She was not particularly pretty at any time; and he had never any passion for her, though he had always liked her well enough, and had always been kind. His father and mother lived till he was in his forties, then died peaceably in their beds. He had been a child of their later years, and before they died they had become almost completely helpless, so that he felt it was time for them to go. He and his wife had three children, all of whom grew to maturity. The oldest, a girl, married an East Harbor boy who later moved to Augusta; the other two, boys, went to Augusta to work in a factory there,

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preferring the ordered hours of confined toil to the long and irregular tasks upon the farm.

Now and then Jeff's wife departed to visit her daughter, leaving him to keep bachelor hall alone. He managed comfortably enough; his life, then as always, followed a well-ordered and familiar routine. He rose at daylight, cared for his stock, made his own breakfast, did whatever tasks lay before him for the day, finished his chores before cooking supper at night, washed the dishes, read the evening paper till he fell asleep in his chair, and then went to bed. Now and then in the spring and summer months he found time to catch a mess of trout; now and then in the fall or winter he shot a partridge or a rabbit. When there was a circus in East Harbor, or a fair, he went to town for the day. When there was a dance in the Grange Hall he and his wife had used to go; but they had long since ceased these frivolities.

Jeff's farm was well kept; he had a profitable orchard, his cows were of good stock. When the price of feed made the enterprise worth while he raised a few pigs. There was no mortgage on the farm, his taxes were paid, he owed no bills, his buildings were in good condition, he owned a secondhand automobile and a piano, and he had some few hundred dollars in the bank. It is fair to say that by the standards of the community in which he lived he was a prosperous man. He was also a just man, and he had a native sense and wit which his neighbors respected.

One November day, some years before this time of which I propose to write, he woke early and looked from his kitchen window and saw a deer feeding on the windfalls in his orchard. He shot the animal through the open window;

and the spike horns, still attached to a fragment of the skull, were kept on the marble-topped table in the parlor of the farmhouse. The shooting of this deer was the most exciting, the most interesting thing that had ever happened to Jeff until that series of incidents in which romance and drama were so absorbingly mingled, and which is to be here set down.

It was a day in October. He had planned to go down into his woodlot and manufacture stove wood, to be stored for use during the winter that was still twelve months away. But when he awoke in the morning a cold rain was lashing his window, and a glance at the sky assured him the rain would continue all that day. He decided to postpone the outdoor task. A few errands in town wanted doing, so he put before his animals sufficient water for their needs till night, threw a thing or two into the tonneau of his car, secured the curtains, cranked the engine and started for East Harbor. Since the road was muddy and somewhat rutted, and he had no chains, it was necessary for him to drive slowly; and his late start made it almost noon when he slid down the steep and muddy hill into the town. He parked his car at an angle in the middle of the street and went to the restaurant presided over by Bob Bumpass for his midday meal. Eating at a restaurant on his trips to town was one of the things Jeff accounted luxuries.

Bob, fat and amiable as a Mine Host out of Dickens, asked Jeff what he wanted; and Jeff ordered Regular Dinner Number Three: Vegetable soup, fried haddock, pie and coffee; thirty-five cents. Not till he had given his order did Jeff perceive that a certain excitement was in the air.

There were two other customers having lunch near where

he sat. One was Dolph Bullen, whose haberdashery was among the most prosperous of East Harbor mercantile establishments; the other was the chief of police, Sam Gallop, a wordy man. Bob Bumpass, having taken Jeff's order and served his soup, leaned against the counter to talk with these two men. Jeff perceived that Sam was telling over again a story that had evidently been told before.

"Yes, sir," said San, "he came right along when I took a hold of him. And he had the necklace in a kind of a leather case in his pocket the whole time."

"You took him right off the Boston Boat, didn't you?" Dolph asked.

"Yep," said Sam. "Right out of his stateroom. He had his suitcase open on the bunk when I knocked on the door. I didn't wait for him to let me in. Just opened her right up and went in; and he looked at me kind of impudent; and he says, 'Hullo,' he says. 'What's the matter?' Cool as you want."

"He come in here one day this summer, when the yacht was in here," Bob commented. "I kind of liked his looks."

Sam shook his head ponderously. "Them's the worst kind. But he didn't fool me."

"Name's Gardner, isn't it?" Dolph asked.

Bob nodded. "Frank Gardner. He's worked for old Viles for six-seven years, he said."

The chief of police was not willing that his part in the affair should be forgotten. He was a round-faced, bald, easy-going man; but he knew his rights, knew that in this drama which had been played he had a leading rôle.

"I says to him, 'Matter enough,' " he continued importantly. " 'I got a warrant for you,' I says. And he asked

me what for; and I told him for stealing Mrs. Viles' jewels. He got red enough at that, and mad looking, I'll tell you. And he started to say something. But I shut him up. 'You can tell that to someone else,' I says. 'My job's to take you up to jail.' Then he asked who swore out the warrant; and I told him old Viles did; and at that he shut up like a clam, and snapped his suitcase shut, and came along. I found the things when I went through his clothes, up't the jail."

He had more to tell, and when Bob Bumpass had brought Jeff his fried haddock and resumed his place as auditor Sam took up the telling. How Leander Viles had come to him, demanding the arrest of his secretary; how he had insisted that the millionaire swear out a warrant; how incensed Viles had become at this insistence.

"I'll tell you," said Sam emphatically, "he got right purple, till I thought the man'd burst; and he sort of fell down in a chair, grabbing at his chest; and then he got white as can be."

Dolphe nodded. "Men like him, big and fat, and full of whisky all the time—they go that way. He's got a temper too. Some day when he's good and mad that heart of his will crack on him."

Their talk continued, and Jeff continued to listen. In any issue it is instinctive for mankind to take sides. Dolph and Bob Bumpass were inclined to think a mistake had been made. "I don't believe he aimed to steal that necklace at all," said Bob; and Jeff found himself agreeing with the restaurant man. The three were still discussing the matter when Jeff finished his pie, paid his score and went his way.

His errands kept him busy all that afternoon. An ax handle, two or three pounds of nails, four feet of strap

iron and a box of shells from the hardware store; a pair of overalls from Dolph Bullen; oatmeal, coffee, sugar and salt from the grocer; a bag of feed from the hay and grain market at the foot of the street. These errands were attended with much casual conversation, chiefly concerned with the arrest of the jewel thief. Late in the afternoon Jeff sought out Ed Whalen, who dealt in coal and wood, and made a deal by which Ed would buy from him a dozen cords of stove wood, to be delivered while snow was on the ground. Ed's office was near the water front; and when Jeff came out he perceived the Viles yacht at her anchorage a little above the steamboat wharf. Jeff studied the craft for a while admiringly, and he wondered how much she had cost. "As much as my whole farm," he guessed. "Or mebbe more."

Night was coming swiftly; the lights aboard the yacht were turned on while he stood there, and her portholes appeared like round and luminous eyes. He could dimly see a sailor or two, in oilskins, under the deck lamps. Rain was still falling, cold and implacable. "Guess the folks that live on her are keeping dry, inside," he hazarded. He tried to picture to himself their manner of life, so different from his own, as he went back up the hill toward where he had left his car.

A farmer from Winterport, whom he had not seen for years, halted him on the corner above Dolph's store, and they talked together for a space in the shelter of the entrance to the bank. A whistle down the harbor announced the coming of the Boston boat; and before they separated another whistle told of her departure. Then Jeff had trouble cranking his car. He had forgotten to cover the hood, and the ignition wires and plugs were wet. One cylinder caught at

last; and then another; and finally all four. He had already loaded in his purchases on the floor and seat of the tonneau. The bag of feed lay along the seat.

The Winterport man had reported that the steamship line would make a new rate for apples by the barrel to Boston that fall; and Jeff decided to go down to the wharf and make inquiries. He parked his car on the edge of the wharf, in the lee of the freight sheds, and this time threw an old rubber blanket over the hood to keep the plugs dry, before turning toward the office. With the departure of the boat, business hereabouts was done for the day; and save for a light in the office, and another on the pier toward shore, the wharf was dark. Jeff's errand occupied some ten minutes' time; and while he was inside a fiercer squall of rain burst over the harbor. He could hear the water drumming on the roof.

When the squall had passed he returned to his car and took the blanket off the hood and threw it into the dark cavern of the tonneau, then cranked the engine and turned around and started home. His lights, run from the magneto, were dim and uncertain; his attention was all upon the road. The car skidded and slid and slued and bumped; but it came to no disaster. He drove into his own barn toward seven o'clock in the evening, and left his purchases untouched while he went into the house to change into overalls, so that he might do his chores.

When he came back into the barn he saw someone standing motionless beside the machine. He lifted the lantern which he carried, so that its light flooded the still figure, and perceived that the person who stood there, facing him, was a woman.

II

This woman, in these surroundings, was an amazing apparition. Against the background of his old hayrick, still half full of hay, Jeff saw her outlined. She wore a sailor's oilskin coat, buttoned about her throat; and beneath the skirts of the draggled coat he glimpsed slim silk-clad ankles and badly soiled white satin pumps. She wore no hat; her hair was wet and all awry; and there was a thin streak of blood from a scratch upon her temple that had trickled down across the bridge of her nose in a slanting direction. Yet in spite of these difficulties he perceived that she was very beautiful.

At sight of her Jeff had stopped in his tracks and still stood motionless with surprise, the lantern in his lifted hand. The woman's white fingers fumbled nervously at the fastenings of the oilskin coat she wore; she waited for a moment in silence; but when he did not speak she nodded in an uneasy little way and stammeringly said to him, "Good evening!" Her voice was full and throaty and pleasantly modulated.

Jeff replied, "Howdo!"

She began to speak very rapidly.

"You're probably wondering how I came here. I was in your car. On the floor of the back seat. Almost crushed. That big bag fell off the seat on top of me when you hit that terrible bump. It banged my head down on a piece of iron. I'm afraid it has bled a little. I was almost smothered. The road was so rough."

She was panting as though she had run a race; and Jeff watched her steadfastly for a moment, and then, for sheer

relief from his astonishment, gripped the commonplace with both hands.

"You better come in the house and wash up," he told her slowly, "and get warm. I guess you're kind of wet."

She nodded. "Yes. I'd like that. I'd like to do that."

He perceived that she was fighting for self-control, putting down the revolt of jangling nerves.

"Come through here, ma'am," he bade her, and led the way through the woodshed and into the kitchen. There he set his lantern on the table and brought fresh water from the pump. "I've been away since morning," he explained. "The water in the tank is cold. You want to wait till I heat some up?"

She shook her head. "This will do finely."

He went through into the bedroom and returned with a heavy porcelain bowl, which he set in the sink, removing the granite-ware washbasin. The woman had sunk down limply in a chair beside the table. Jeff, careful not to distress her by his scrutiny, unwrapped a fresh bar of soap, brought out a clean towel. Then with half a dozen motions he threw shavings and bits of kindling into the stove, touched a match to them, laid a stick or two of hardwood atop. "That'll warm the kitchen up pretty quick," he told her. He understood that she wished to be alone, yet was not sure what he should do. At last he said awkwardly, "I'll be doing the chores," and lighted a lamp for her, then took the lantern and departed through the shed again.

When he had gone only a few steps he stopped, considered, then returned and knocked upon the door through which he had come out. She bade him enter; and when he did so he found her on her feet, unfastening the long black coat.

"You could go into the bedroom," he said tentatively.

She shook her head, smiling gratefully. "I'm sure this is fine. But I would like a comb."

"I'll get my wife's for you," he replied; and brought it to her. Mrs. Ranney was a good housekeeper; the comb was as clean as new. "Would there be anything else?" he asked when she had thanked him for it.

"No. But you're very kind to me."

"I'll get the chores done," he replied uncomfortably, and this time departed in good earnest to the barn.

When he had fed and watered the stock, finding a relief in the familiar routine, he removed his purchases from the car. Saw where the woman had crouched on the floor. The rubber blanket which he had thrown in at the wharf must have fallen across her back; the heavy sack of feed might well have crushed her. "Lucky she wa'n't worse hurt," he told himself. He was full of speculations, full of questions, half dazed with wonder. Women of such a sort as this were as though they lived in another world. Yet she was in his kitchen now.

It was necessary for him to go back to the house to get the milking pails. Again he knocked upon the door, and the woman bade him come in. She had laid aside the oilskins; he was not able at once to understand just what it was she wore. A dress, but of a sort unfamiliar to his eyes. He had seen magazine pictures of such things. An evening gown, décolleté. Her hair was loose in a warm cloud about her smooth shoulders, and she was leaning above the stove.

"I'm sorry," she apologized, flushing with some confusion. "I'm trying to get it dry."

He would have backed out of the kitchen. "I'm not in a hurry, ma'am."

But she cried warmly, "No, no, it's all right. Come in."

"I come to get the milk pails," he explained. "I scalded them out this morning." He took them from the draining board at one end of the sink. "I'll go milk now."

She asked diffidently, "Can't I be starting supper while you're doing that?"

Jeff smiled faintly. "I'm used to cooking. I know where the things are."

"I can cook," she assured him. "What are we going to have for supper?" She was beginning to see some humor in the situation.

"Why I just figured to scramble some eggs, and make coffee," Jeff confessed. "The things are in the pantry, in through the dining room," he added.

"I'll have supper all ready when you come back," she promised.

He said reluctantly, "Well, all right," and left her there.

When he returned, half an hour later, he found her, her hair in a loose braid, wearing one of his wife's aprons, busy about the kitchen table. "I've everything ready," she told him, "but I waited, so that things would be nice and hot."

"I got to separate the milk first," he explained.

She nodded and, while he performed that operation, busied herself with egg beater and mixing bowl. He took the cream down cellar, set the skim milk in the shed for his hogs. When he had washed his hands and face she summoned him to supper in the dining room. She had made an omelet and toast, and her coffee was better than his. He ate with the

silent intentness of a hungry man. Afterward she insisted on washing the dishes, while he read, fitfully enough, yet with an appearance of absorption, the paper that had been left that afternoon in the mail box before the door. There was something grotesquely domestic in the situation, and Jeff's pulses were pounding with wonder at it all.

He had asked the woman no single question. There were a thousand questions he desired to ask, but an innate delicacy restrained him. The glamour of the hour had dazed this man; his senses were confused. There was an unreality about the whole experience. The dishes, rattling in the sink, sounded no differently than when his wife washed them. The illusion that it was his wife who had come home in this guise had for a moment dominion over him. The lines of newsprint staggered and swam before his inattentive eyes. He wondered, wondered, wondered. But he asked no question of his guest.

When she had finished her self-appointed task and come into the dining room where he was sitting she seemed to expect a catechism; but Jeff kept his eyes upon his paper, as a man clings to a safe anchorage, till at last she was forced to speak.

"I've been expecting you to question me," she said uncertainly.

Jeff looked up at her and then found some re-assurance in the fact that the silence was thus broken. "I've been expecting you'd tell me without asking," he said, smiling faintly at her.

"I ought to," she nodded. "But there's so much to tell; and it must sound so incredible to you. I hid in your car at the wharf, blindly, not knowing who you were. I had to

get away; wanted to get away. Anywhere. To hide. For a little while. I can pay you." She spoke uncertainly, unwilling to give offense.

Jeff shook his head good-humoredly. "I don't run a boarding house, ma'am."

"I have to find some place where I can stay."

He was thoughtfully silent for a little, then asked, "How long?"

"I don't know. Perhaps only a little while."

"I guess you can stay here a while," he said.

"You spoke of your wife?" she suggested.

"She's visiting my daughter, over in Augusta," Jeff explained. "Won't be back for a week anyways. I reckon it'd be easier for you if she was here; but you're welcome anyways."

She looked down helplessly at the gown she wore. "It was a mad thing to do," she whispered, half to herself. Jeff guessed what she was thinking.

"I reckon you could wear some of my wife's things," he suggested.

"Have you room for me?"

There were two bedrooms on the ground floor of the farmhouse; but he thought she would prefer a measure of isolation. "I can make the bed in the room upstairs," he replied.

"Won't your neighbors be surprised that I am here?"

Jeff considered that for a long time in silence, till she began to be afraid the obstacle was insuperable. Then his eyes lighted with recollection, and he said slowly, "My brother moved to California and married there, and his girl has been talking about coming to see us. We can let on you're her."

She cried with sudden friendly warmth in her tones, "You're ever so kind to me. I appreciate it. Your taking me in so unquestioningly."

"That's all right," he told her.

"I'm going to take you at your word," she exclaimed. "I'm going to stay."

III

Jeff Ranney was a man habituated to routine; he fell naturally into a regular way of doing even irregular things. The next morning his life was on the surface as it had always been. He rose to his chores, returned to his breakfast, went into the woodlot and set about the task he had postponed the day before. The woman cooked breakfast and did the work about the kitchen that his wife might have done. It would have been easy for any outsider to accept as fact her pretended status as Jeff's niece from California.

But Jeff was not deceived by the apparent normality of this new existence. The man was immensely curious about her, absorbed in the mystery which she personified. His thoughts all that day were full of conjectures, full of hypotheses, formed and as quickly thrown away. One guess he clung to as probably fact. It seemed to him certain she had come ashore from that yacht which he had seen lying in East Harbor the night before; had come ashore as one who flees. But to the questions who she might be and why she had fled, he found a thousand answers and accepted none of them.

The question of her identity was solved that night, for on the first page of his Boston paper a headline caught his eye. It read thus:

MILLIONAIRE VILES'
WIFE IS A SUICIDE

His eyes moved down the closely printed column intent on each word. Save for journalistic padding the first paragraph told the story:

East Harbor, Me., Oct. 18—Lucia Viles, wife of Leander Viles, the millionaire banker, committed suicide here last night by drowning. She left the Viles' yacht, which is anchored in the harbor, in a small rowboat, at a moment when a heavy squall of rain had driven the crew to shelter; and it is presumed that she threw herself into the water as soon as she had reached a sufficient distance so that she would not be seen. The tide was running out; and the rowboat was picked up by an incoming fisherman early this morning, down below the bell buoy, three miles from the yacht's anchorage. The body has not been recovered. Mr. Viles, millionaire husband of the dead woman, said to-day that she had been subject to fits of melancholy for some time.

Jeff read this while his guest was washing the dishes after supper. She had thrown herself zealously into these household tasks, as though her overstrained nerves found relief in them. When she came into the dining room afterward he laid the paper down in such a manner that she must see the headline which had caught his eye.

She did see it, caught up the paper, read hurriedly, looked up when she was done, to find him watching her.

"You've read it?" she asked. He nodded. "I didn't think they'd have it in the papers," she cried, as though appalled at what she had done.

"Guess you didn't make your boat fast when you landed," Jeff suggested.

She shook her head. "No, I pushed it off. I hoped they would think this."

He studied her, surprised and thoughtful. "Won't your husband be kind of worried about you?" he suggested mildly, and was startled at the fierce anger behind her reply.

"I want him to be worried! Oh, I want him to be tortured!" she cried, and became absorbed once more in that which was printed on the page before her. "The body has not been recovered," she read aloud after a moment; and with a quick change of mood laughed at him, shuddering faintly. "It does give me a creepy feeling," she said.

"I should think it might," Jeff assented mildly. "Yes, I should think it would."

She was wearing a gingham dress belonging to his wife, which he had found at her request. Now, sitting across the table from him, she began to tremble and to laugh in nervous bursts of sound.

Jeff asked, "What's the matter? What you laughing at?"

"I can't stop," she told him helplessly. "It just strikes me as funny. I can't help laughing. If I didn't laugh I should cry. They think I'm dead. Dead!" The word was high pitched, almost like a scream.

Jeff had seen feminine hysteria before; he said sternly, "You got to stop. Now you be still."

The woman controlled herself at once, nodding reassuringly. "Yes, I'll be still. I will be still," she promised. "You won't let them find me here, will you? You won't let them know I'm here?"

"Andy Wattles stopped here this morning, in the truck," Jeff answered. "I told him you'd come. He'd heard me say you was thinking of coming. It was safest to tell him."

"But I wasn't thinking of coming!" she cried, appalled.

"My brother's girl from California was," he reminded her; and she nodded over and over, as a child nods, to show her understanding and her acquiescence. Her trembling had ceased; her fright was passing. She went to bed at last somewhat reassured.

But the paper next day, in even larger headlines, announced that doubt was cast upon the theory that she was a suicide.

"Mr. Viles," the reporter wrote, "said to-day he thought it possible his wife might have become temporarily insane; that she was subject to hours of extreme nervous depression. It is known that she took a considerable sum of money from a safe in her cabin before she left the yacht. It is possible that she went ashore upon some errand and was assaulted and robbed. The three possibilities which the police of East Harbor are considering are suicide, robbery and murder, or an insane flight." Jeff smiled at the picture of Sam Gallop, the "police of East Harbor," considering anything. "In order to enlist every possible helper in the search for the missing woman," the reporter added, "Mr. Viles has offered a reward of a thousand dollars for her body or of ten thousand for information that will lead to her discovery alive."

The woman, when she read this, shivered with dread. "They will find me," she told Jeff wearily. "Oh, I hoped they would believe me dead."

"I dunno as they'll find you," Jeff argued. "They're not apt to look out this way. They're more likely to think you headed for Boston or somewheres."

"It's hopeless," she insisted. "I think you'd better go tell them where I am, and get the money. The ten thousand dollars. Some good will come out of it, that way. I'd

like you to have the money. You've been kind to me."

The man laughed reassuringly. "Shucks, ma'am," he said. "What would I do with a lot of money like that? It's no good except to buy things with, and I've got more things than I can take care of now. Don't you fret yourself. They ain't going to find you, ma'am."

"Everyone knows I'm here. Those women who came today—" She moved her hands drearily. "Someone will tell."

Jeff shook his head. "No, they won't. That was Will Bissell's wife and Mrs. McAusland. They heard from the store that you was here; and they'd heard my wife say you was coming."

"Oh, they must have seen that I was—" She paused, unwilling to hurt him.

"Different from us folks?" he asked, smiling at her understandingly. "Well, California folks are different from people around here. They'd have thought it was funny if you was like us."

"And my wearing your wife's dress."

"I told 'em your trunk was lost. You had to have something to work around the house in."

She was, in the end, unwillingly persuaded to a more hopeful point of view. But when she had gone up the stairs to her room Jeff sat for a long time, turning the newspaper in his hands, reading over and over that which was written there. She was so beautiful, so much more beautiful than anyone he had ever seen; and the gown she wore when she came to the farm had stamped itself upon his visual memory as a part of her beauty. That a reward of ten thousand dollars should have been offered for her discovery did not surprise Jeff;

though it added to the glamour which cloaked her in his eyes.

"She's worth more," he told himself softly. "If she was mine I'd give a hundred times that much to get her back again." And he thought of this husband of hers, whom she wished to torture, and wondered what he had done to her, and hated this man he had never seen because the woman hated him. "He's not going to get her back," Jeff swore in his thoughts. "If I can help her keep away from him he'll not get her again." There was nothing possessive in the feeling which was awakening in him. His devotion to her was a completely unselfish force.

It was also the most powerful emotion Jeff had felt in all his fifty-seven years.

IV

Will Belter stopped at the farm next morning, and lingered, talking with Jeff, watching furtively for a glimpse of the woman; asked at last point-blank, if it was true that Jeff's niece had come to visit him. He and Jeff were on the porch, outside the kitchen door; and Jeff nodded and, raising his voice, called to the woman, who was inside. He called her by his niece's name.

"Mary!"

She came slowly to the door, dreading this contact with a stranger.

"This here's Will Belter, one of our neighbors," Jeff said by way of introduction. "He lives up on the ridge beyond the village."

Will, greedy eyes upon her, said, "Howdo, ma'am?"

The woman watched him through the screen door, and answered, "How do you do?"

He said no more, and after a moment she turned back into the obscurity of the kitchen.

Will told Jeff, "She's older than I figured she'd be."

"She looks older," Jeff agreed. "That long train trip was pretty hard; and she was kind of sick."

"Ain't but twenty-two or three, is she? I'd think she was thirty, anyway."

"Twenty-four," Jeff told him.

When Will presently went on his way Jeff watched his disappearing figure with stern eyes, and there was trouble in his countenance when he turned and saw the woman standing inside the screen door and also watching.

"Who was that?"

"I'd as soon he hadn't come here," Jeff confessed. "He's a mean hound. A natural-born talebearer. Maybe we fooled him though."

She made no comment, but both understood that her desire to remain hidden was imperiled by this man's appearance. The shadow hung over them all that day. In the evening they read the paper together, found in it little that was new.

Afterwards the woman sat for a long time, thoughtfully silent, and at last said abruptly, "I think I'd better tell you why I ran away."

Jeff looked across at her in surprise, hesitated. Then: "You needn't, 'less you're a mind to," he assured her. "It don't matter a bit in the world to me."

"It is your right to know," she decided. "And—I'd like to be able to talk about it with you. It would be a relief, I believe."

Jeff nodded. "I expect that's so," he assented.

She took the paper from him, opened it to an inner page and pointed to a paragraph under a separate headline, beneath the story of her own disappearance.

"You saw this about Mr. Viles' secretary being arrested?" she asked.

Jeff looked at the paper. The paragraph recited the fact that after a preliminary hearing Franklin Gardner, secretary to Leander Viles, had been held for the grand jury on a charge of stealing gems belonging to the missing woman.

Ranney nodded. "I heard about his being arrested, in town that day," he told her.

"That was why I had to run away!" she cried, a sudden passion in her tones. "That was why I had to get away. Because it was I who saw him take them, and if they made me tell he would have to go to jail."

She was leaning across the table, resting on her elbows, her fingers twisting together; and she watched Jeff anxiously, hungrily, as though to be sure he understood.

Jeff considered what she had said for a moment, and at length asked slowly, "Saw him steal them?"

"It's a necklace," she explained desperately. "Pearls, and a pendant set with diamonds, very beautifully. Mr. Viles used to boast how much he paid for it. He was ever so proud of it, you see. He wanted to show it to a man who is on the yacht with him, and that's why he asked me to go down to the cabin and get it from the safe."

Jeff was trying to fill out the gaps in her story. "That's when you found out the necklace was gone, eh?" he inquired.

She nodded. Her words came in a rush:

"I saw Mr. Gardner come out of my cabin door, with the

leather case in his hand. He dodged away; and I suppose he thought I had not seen him. And when I opened the little safe in my cabin the necklace was gone."

Jeff grinned a little at that. "So your husband didn't get to show it off, and brag about it, after all?"

His antipathy toward this husband of hers was increasing.

The woman shook her head. "I had to go back and tell him it was gone," she assented. "And he went into one of his terrible rages. I was frightened. The doctors have warned him. So I tried to reassure him, told him that Mr. Gardner had the necklace." Her hands were tightly clasped, the knuckles white. "Oh, I shouldn't have let him know!" she cried wearily. "But I thought he must have asked Mr. Gardner to get it, must have given him the combination of the safe. Only he and I had it."

Memories silenced her; and Jeff had to prompt her with a question: "But he hadn't done that?"

"He hadn't! He hadn't!" she assented in a voice like a wail. "And when we tried to find Mr. Gardner he was gone. Gone off the yacht. Had run away. So then Mr. Viles went ashore himself, and by and by he came back, very well pleased, and said they had caught Mr. Gardner on the boat and had the necklace back again."

"Did you run away right then?" he asked, when he saw she had forgotten to go on.

She hesitated, as though choosing her words.

"No," she told him. "That was the day before. I was very unhappy even then. But until the next day I did not realize. Mr. Viles made me see. It was just before dinner, and I met him in the main cabin. He was very expansive

and very good-humored and triumphant. He spoke of Mr. Gardner. And he said this to me."

She repeated the words in a curious, parrot-like tone, as though they were engraved upon her memory. "He said: 'It's lucky you saw him, Lucia. If you hadn't actually seen him come out of your cabin with the necklace in his hands we probably couldn't send him to jail, even now!' "

Jeff was watching her attentively, waiting.

"I hadn't really understood, before, that they would send him to jail," the woman cried. "I begged him not to; and he just laughed at me. He said: 'He'll do ten years for this little piece of work, Lucia. And you'll be the one whose testimony will send him up. That ought to be a satisfaction to you.' "

She added, with a movement of her hands as though everything were explained, "So I ran away. There was a sailor who helped me and gave me his coat, and I ran away, and got in your car because it was raining so hard and that was the first place I saw where I could hide and be sheltered from the rain."

She broke off abruptly; and neither of them spoke for a period, while Jeff considered that which she had told him.

At length he asked gently, "You didn't want to see this here Gardner in jail?"

The woman cried passionately, "No! No! Oh, he was wrong to steal. If I had not seen him I would never have believed— But I didn't want to put him in jail!"

"I guess you liked him pretty well," Jeff said. His tone was sympathetic, not inquisitive.

"Yes," she nodded sadly, as though she spoke of one who were dead. "Yes, I did." With a sudden confidence she

added, "Why, he was my best friend. We knew each other so well. It was through him I met Mr. Viles. And then Frank had to go to Europe on business for Mr. Viles, and he was away so long, and I did not hear from him. I used to work, you know. I was a buyer in one of the New York stores. And Mr. Viles was ever so good to me, and I was tired, and he begged me so. That was how I came to marry him."

"I don't figure you ever loved him very much," Jeff suggested after an interval.

"He was good to me at first," she protested. "I think he meant to be good to me."

Silence fell upon them both once more, and this time it persisted. By and by Jeff rose from his chair, passed behind hers and touched her shoulder roughly with his heavy hand.

"I wouldn't worry too much," he said cheerfully. "I wouldn't worry too much if I was you."

She looked up at him and smiled through sudden tears. "You're good to me," she told him.

"You run along to bed," Jeff bade her. "Just forget your bothers and run along to bed."

But when she had gone upstairs the man remained for a long time in his chair beside the warm lamp, thinking over what she had told him, supplying for himself the things she had not told. Jeff had a shrewd common sense; he was able to fill in many of the gaps, to see the truths to which even Lucia was blind. And as he thought, his eyes clouded with slow anger and his brows drew somewhat together; and when he got up at last to turn toward his bedroom there was a ferocity in his expression that no one had ever seen on Jeff

Ranney's face, in all his fifty-seven years. He spoke slowly, half aloud, addressing no one at all.

"Damn the man," he muttered. "I'd like to bust him a good one. It'd do him good."

Upon this wish, which had a solemnity about it almost like a prayer, Jeff went to bed.

V

Next morning, when Andy Wattles drove by the farm with Will Bissell's truck on his way to East Harbor, Jeff saw that Andy had a passenger. Will Belter was riding to town with Andy. They hailed him as they passed the barn, and Andy waved a hand in greeting as they disappeared. Jeff's perceptions were quick; it was no more than half a dozen seconds before he understood that there was menace in this move on Belter's part. His first thought was to stop the man and bring him back, but the truck was already far away along the townward road. He shook his head; there was nothing he could do. If Belter meant harm the harm was done.

But the incident put Jeff on his guard, so that he made it his business to stay about the house that day; and when, in the early afternoon, an automobile stopped in the road before the farm he saw it and was ready. He had given the woman no warning, but she heard the machine, and came to his side in the dining room and looked out through the window. Themselves hidden, they could see the car. Three men were in it—the chauffeur, Will Belter and another. Jeff knew this other man; it needed not the woman's exclamation to inform him. Her husband had found her hiding place.

When Lucia saw him she sank weakly in a chair beside the table, said in a voice like a moan, "He's found me! He's found me!"

But for this crisis of his adventure Jeff was ready; he rose to meet the moment, gripped her shoulder.

"Just mind this," he told her swiftly. "Keep your head, ma'am, and mind what I say. You don't have to go back with him unless you want. He can't make you, ha'n't no legal way to make you; and if you don't want to go you don't have to go. I'll see he don't take you unless you say the word."

She looked up at him in swift gratitude; and he smiled at her and asked, "Now can't you take a little heart from that, ma'am?"

"He's coming," she whispered.

And Jeff looked through the window again and saw that Viles had left Belter and the chauffeur in the car he had hired in East Harbor. He himself came steadily toward the kitchen door, while the two other men watched him from the road. Jeff and the woman heard his loud knock upon the door.

At this summons Jeff left her where she sat, her strength returning. He opened the kitchen door and faced the man he had learned to hate so blindingly that the passion intoxicated him. Yet his countenance was calm, his features all composed.

Viles was a large man without being fat; one of those men who have about them the apparent solidity of flesh which is the attribute of such dogs as Boston terriers. He may have been six feet tall, but he was inches broader across the shoulders than most men of his height. His countenance was

peculiarly pink, as though rich blood coursed too near the surface of his skin. Jeff marked that he was subject to a certain shortness of breath, that his eyes were too small, and that even now a little pulse was beating in the man's throat.

Yet Viles spoke in a smooth and pleasant voice, said a jovial good afternoon and asked if this was Jeff Ranney's farm. Jeff said it was.

Viles asked, "Are you Ranney?"

"I'm Ranney," Jeff assented. He had not asked the other to come in; the screen door still separated them.

"Ah," said Viles. "I am told your niece from California is visiting you. I have a rather important bit of business to transact with her."

Jeff shook his head. "She ain't my niece," he answered frankly. "She's your wife, that had to run away from you."

His voice was stony; but at his words Viles moved backward a step, as though under the impact of a blow, and Jeff saw the swift rage mount his cheeks in a purple flood. Then the rich man laid his hand upon the screen door, opened it.

Jeff did not move to one side, and Viles said hoarsely: "Get out of my way, you impudent fool!"

Jeff shook his head. "Listen, mister," he said softly. "This is my house. You can't come in here on your own say-so. I'm not fooling with you either. If you want to come in, you ask."

Viles lifted one clenched hand as though to sweep the other aside; and Jeff added, "I've heard enough about you so I'd like right well to mix it up with you a little bit—if you want to try anything like that. Do you?"

"I want to come in," said Viles hoarsely.

Jeff considered this for a moment, then he spoke to the

woman, over his shoulder. "Do you want to see him?" he asked her.

"I suppose so," she told him wearily.

Jeff nodded. "All right, mister," he said to Viles. "Come in and take a chair."

Viles had somewhat recovered himself. He followed Jeff's indifferent back into the dining room. The woman did not rise. Jeff set a chair across the table from her, and Viles sat down in it while Jeff himself crossed to shut the door that led into the parlor, then came back and leaned against the kitchen door, watching this husband and wife, waiting for what they would say.

Viles had drawn a velvet glove over the iron hand. He asked the woman gently, "Are you all right, my dear?" She nodded. "You are well?"

"Yes," she said slowly. "Yes, I am well."

He looked toward Jeff. "Mrs. Viles is unfortunately subject to moments of great depression," he explained courteously. "In these moments—" He stopped, arched his eyebrows meaningly, as though Jeff must understand.

"You mean she has crazy spells?" Jeff asked bluntly. Viles protested wordlessly. "She don't act crazy to me," Jeff commented. "But you may be right. She married you."

He was seeking quite deliberately to goad the other man into violence, but Viles controlled himself, said across the table to his wife, "We have been greatly concerned, my dear."

"I'm sorry," she said unconvincingly.

"It's a relief to know that you have not suffered. That scratch across your temple—"

Lucia touched with her fingers the slight wound. "It is nothing."

"You must have a good rest in bed when we get back to the yacht," he told her. There was an elephantine sportiveness in the man's demeanor. "I'm going to enjoy taking care of you."

She was silent for a moment, then slowly shook her head. "I don't think I'll go back," she told him. "I don't think I'll go back at all."

He tried to laugh easily. "You're fancying things, Lucia. It is your home. You belong there."

She faced him with a moment of decision. "If you withdraw the charge against Frank I'll go back with you, Leander."

"Withdraw it?" he asked in pretended astonishment.

"I can't bear to have him go to jail," she cried softly.

"But, my dear, the man's a thief; has betrayed the trust I reposed in him."

"I can't help it. I can't help it. I don't want him to go to jail."

Viles dropped his eyes to the oilcloth that covered the table and drummed upon it with his fingers for a moment, then turned to Jeff.

"I'd be obliged for a few moments' talk with my wife alone," he said, a sardonic note in his tone.

Jeff held his eyes for a minute, then looked toward the woman. "What shall I do, ma'am?" he asked, as though it were a matter of course that he should defer to her.

She made a weary gesture. "He has a right to that," she said.

Jeff nodded. "I'll come back in fifteen minutes, mister," he told Viles menacingly.

But Viles smiled in affable assent. "That will do finely," he agreed.

Jeff went out through the kitchen into the shed. When he was gone Viles rose and crossed to listen at the door, and heard Jeff go on into the barn. He returned to the dining room and stood above his wife, and when she did not move he gripped her chin harshly and turned her face up to his. No velvet glove upon the iron hand now. She winced a little with the pain, but made no sound. There was triumph and malice in his grin.

"Thought you could get away with it, did you, Lucia?" he asked. She said nothing. "Thought I wouldn't find you?" Still she made no sound. "Where'd you pick up this rural squire of yours?"

His tone was insult, and her continued silence seemed to anger him; he loosed her chin with a gesture as though he flung her aside; rounded the table again and sat down facing her and lighted a cigar, watching his wife through the smoke. For a long minute neither of them moved or spoke; then she lifted her head, very slowly, and met his eyes.

After an instant he laughed at her mockingly and leaned forward, gesturing with the cigar, dropping flecks of ash upon the oilcloth.

"Lucia, my dear," he said, "you haven't played fair with me. You and that tame cat of yours. And now I'm going to even the score. If you loved him you shouldn't have married me. Or having married me you should have ceased to love him. Isn't that a fair statement of the ethics of the case?"

"I didn't know, Leander," she said pitifully. "He had been so long away."

"I sent him away," the man admitted harshly. "I wanted a clear field, and got it and got you. Thought I was getting the whole of you. But when he came back I saw within six months' time that it was only the husk of you I had won."

"You're unfair!" she cried. "Frank never spoke to me—there was never anything—"

"What do I care?" Viles demanded. "Don't you suppose I know that? Don't you suppose I've seen to it that you were both pretty closely looked after? But you loved him, and he loved you. A blind man could see that whenever you were together."

"I played fair with you," his wife pleaded. "And he did too."

"That's because you were afraid to do anything else," he assured her scornfully. "That's because you're weaklings. I'm not a weakling, my dear. In his place I'd have you. In my place I've evened the score—against both of you."

She began to sense that there was something more, something she did not know. "What?" she asked faintly. "What have you done to him?"

He puffed at his cigar, relishing it, relishing the situation. "You two blind fools! Did you think I was also blind?"

She shook her head helplessly. "What are you trying to say?"

The man swung around for a moment to look toward the road and make sure the two men who had come with him were still in the car, then leaned across the table toward her, speaking softly.

"I gave Frank the combination of your safe," he told her,

grinning with delight in this moment of his triumph. "I told him to get the necklace, and take it to Boston. To have it restrung; a surprise for you. Told him not to let you see him, not to let you know. The poor fool believed me."

She was staring at him, half understanding. "He didn't steal it? He didn't steal it, then?"

"And the pretty part of it was the way I rang you in," her husband assured her mockingly. "Sending you down to the cabin at a moment when I knew he would be there. So that you might catch him in the very doing of it. So that your own testimony, my dear, might send this sweetheart of yours to jail." Her eyes widened, she was white as snow; and he threw back his head and laughed aloud. "Ah, you see it now?"

Lucia came swiftly to her feet. "He didn't steal it? He didn't steal it?" she cried. "Oh, he won't have to go to jail!"

Her husband chuckled, watching her narrowly. "Not so quick on the trigger, Lucia. Not so fast. He'll go to jail, right enough. Don't worry about that. And you'll send him there."

"But he didn't do it, Leander?" she urged pleadingly. "He's not a thief at all!"

"Of course he isn't," Viles assented. "That's the beauty of the little trap I laid."

Flames were burning in her cheeks now; her head was high. "I won't testify against him," she said swiftly. "You can't do it without me, and I won't—"

"That was why you ran away?" he asked casually. "To avoid testifying? I thought as much."

"I won't go back!" she cried. "I'll go away again!"

He smiled. "There were others who saw," he told her mildly. "Do you suppose I would be content with so loose a plan? They saw him, as well as you. Saw you also." He leaned toward her ferociously. "You'll testify, and you'll tell the truth, or I'll convict you of perjury on your own lie, my dear. He'll go to jail certainly; and you also if you choose."

The woman was very intent, her thoughts racing. And suddenly she laughed in his face. "And I'll tell what you've just told me," she reminded him. "How long will your scheme stand then?"

He shook his head. "Oh, no, you won't, my dear."

"I will."

"There is," he said equably, "a little provision in the law of evidence which will prevent you. A wife cannot testify to any private conversation between herself and her husband. Did you suppose I would be so mad as to let you slip out of this trap so easily? The judge himself will forbid your saying one word as to what I have told you here."

She was trembling with despair. "I won't obey him!" she cried. "I'll tell anyway. The jurymen will believe me."

"If you blurt out such a thing against the order of the court you will be jailed for contempt, and the jury will be forbidden to believe you, will be told to forget what you have said." He shook his head mockingly. "No, Lucia, my dear, there's no way out. I have told you this simply in order that you might appreciate the pains I have taken." He laughed a little. "What a thoughtful husband you have!"

He was still sitting, watching her with a cruel satisfaction; but she was trembling, broken, her knees yielding beneath her. By littles she sank into her chair, and put her head down upon her arms and wept bitterly.

Her husband watched her from across the table and puffed at his cigar.

Then Jeff Ranney opened the parlor door and came into the room. Viles, at the sound of the opening door, looked up in surprise, looked toward the kitchen through which Jeff had disappeared, looked at Jeff again.

"What were you doing there?" he demanded, coming to his feet in sudden anger.

"Listening to you talk," said Jeff equably.

"Listening? How long?"

"Oh, I came right around the house and in the front door, soon as I went out the back. Heard all you said, I guess."

Lucia had stopped crying; she lifted her head and dried her eyes and looked at Jeff. He looked down at her and smiled, a reassuring smile that gave her somehow comfort.

Viles swung toward him, cried aloud, "You dog! I'll teach you manners!"

"Yes, sir," said Jeff slowly. "I'd like right well to mix it up with you."

Viles stopped in his tracks; the man was convulsed and shaking with his own ferocious rage. "But it ain't fair to pick on you," Jeff decided; "you're such a fool."

Lucia came to her feet, turned to Jeff appealingly. "You heard what he said?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is it true? Can he do this? Is the law that way?"

Viles reached toward his wife, would have taken her arm. "Lucia!" he cried. "Come away from here. Come away from here with me."

But Jeff put an arm between them, swept the big man back against the table. For an instant no one of them

moved. Then Jeff said slowly, "I had a lawsuit once, so I happen to know. What he says is all right. On private conversations. But you see, this wa'n't private. I heard."

"You heard?" she whispered, not understanding.

Jeff nodded. "Sure. And I can tell anything I heard; and I guess—not sure, but it don't matter much, anyhow—I guess you can tell it, too, if I heard what he said."

He was looking down at her, had for the moment forgotten her husband. But Lucia had not forgotten, and it was Lucia's cry that warned Jeff. Viles was tugging a pistol from his pocket.

Jeff swung his right leg upward, kicked cunningly at the big man's hand. The pistol flew across the room; and Viles, roaring with pain, swung in at Jeff to grapple him. They came breast to breast, stood thus for an instant, each straining terribly, exerting utmost strength.

Then Viles' big head drooped with a little snapping jerk as all his body let go; and he slid limply through Jeff's arms to the floor. Jeff's one great hour was done.

An hour later Jeff drove Lucia back to town. He would send a man who made such matters his profession, to care for what was left of Leander Viles.

VI

A day or two later Mrs. Ranney came home from Augusta. By that time Jeff had settled into the old routine once more. His life had become again as uneventful as any life can be. Save for one or two echoes of his great adventure—when Lucia wrote that she and Gardner were to wed, and when their first baby was born—his existence continued in its old ac-

customed way. He lived some dozen years or so on his farm eight miles out of East Harbor. Last winter, while working in his woodlot, he became overheated and then chilled with the coming of night; and a few days later he died.

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